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The INNER SENTINEL

The INNER SENTINEL

A Study of Ourselves and of Something More

by

L. P. JACKS

Author of
"All Men Are Ghosts"
"Constructive Citizenship"
"The Magic Formula"

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Publishers 1930

HARPER & BROTHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

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FIRST EDITION
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UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FEB 2 1959

The INNER SENTINEL

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

—Exodus III. 14

I

RELIGION, STUDIED AND UNSTUDIED

IN THESE days religion is being taken in hand by experts with a thoroughness unknown in any previous age. Sometimes the intentions are friendly, but as often not. There are some, indeed, who study religion impartially, in the spirit of scientific detachment, of whom it is not always easy to say whether they are hostile or friendly; and others, again, who take it up as a promising subject for eloquence, though perhaps without clearly knowing their own motive. The science of religion, the psychology of religion, the history of religion, the philosophy of religion, the evolution of religion—these are expressions familiar to every educated man. Science must always isolate its material before getting to work, and religion accordingly has been detached for scientific purposes from the general mass of human interests and made into a subject of special investigation by experts. In every centre of learning religion is being "viewed" through the telescopes of philosophy and dissected under the microscopes of psychology, and the "views" about it, both on the large scale and on the small, are innumerable.

An immense literature about religion pours from the press. Books about religion are being written from every possible "point of view." Even sermons, which used to be chiefly occupied in calling sinners to repentance, are now largely devoted to expounding the nature of religion, its origin, its conditions, its probable future, its relations to morality, to science, to art and to politics, and the general importance of cultivating it in all these relations. Elaborate measures are being taken for the safety of religion, and movements, supported by large sums of money, are being organized for that purpose.

In addition to all this there is a marked tendency in many quarters to regard religion as a sick patient, in need of medical treatment, professionally administered, to save its threatened life from the corrupting influences of the time. Much of the literature about religion is occupied with the "diagnosis" of its present sicknesses, and with the prescription of the appropriate medicine, or surgical operation, which the patient requires to restore it to health or to set it marching. Here also the expert is much in evidence, though the quack is not unknown. It might even be said that a trade has grown up in providing remedies for the sicknesses of religion, somewhat analogous to the trade in patent medicines. These remedies are of many kinds, and some of them it must be confessed are desperate; though most of them are well meant. On the whole I think it is

strictly true that never before has religion been so thoroughly taken in hand.

And yet it may be doubted whether any man, since the world began, has ever been made religious by the study of religion. It may even be doubted, though this is more questionable, whether the great men of old, whom we now recognize as the outstanding religious figures of history, knew how religious they were. They certainly said very little about religion, though they had much to say about life and death and the great powers which preside over them both. It would seem that religion always came to these men, not when they were studying religion, but when they were studying something else; never came as the thing they were directly aiming at, but always as the result, sometimes unexpected, of their getting deeply immersed in other things; deeply immersed in the work of their hands as hunters, shepherds, mariners, tillers of the soil, or as artists and craftsmen; deeply immersed in the joys and sorrows of their neighbours; deeply immersed in the duties and responsibilities of their citizenship; deeply immersed in the struggle for existence, the battle of life and the bitterness of death, this last especially. Some of them sank into an utter loneliness, and became immersed in *themselves*, in profound meditation on that mysterious entity which affirms its existence by saying "I am"; and others, forgetting self altogether, became immersed in the universe about them, in the vastness of it, the majesty of it.

Out of these deep immersions there came religion, came spontaneously without being sought for or worried about, came, as it were, by indirection. Such seems to have been the way in which religion was born in the great men of old, not by taking it vigorously in hand, but by taking something else vigorously in hand. One might describe religion as a byproduct of the pursuit of excellence, but obviously of great value, or at least so esteemed by those who found it.

Even so late as the Protestant Reformation the study of religion *as such* had little or nothing to do with the movements and counter movements of the time. The analysis of the religious consciousness, the psychology of it, the history of it, the whole range of questions discussed by William James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience" or by any modern treatise on Mysticism, had not yet risen above the horizon and were almost unborn. The Protestants of that time were studying something else; and the something else they were studying was the Bible—a wholly different occupation from the study of religion under the guidance of William James, or of Professor Bosanquet or of Evelyn Underhill. These men of old were immersed in the Bible, in the same sense that Professor Eddington and Sir James Jeans are immersed in the universe, the Bible being for them a kind of universe in compression. As they were musing on what they found in the Bible the fires of religion were

kindled within them. It was so with Luther, and later on with Bunyan and Wesley.

I can think of no great religious revival which has arisen directly from the study of religion *as such*, either in the Catholic or the Protestant churches. The same seems to be true, perhaps more clearly so, of the great revivals of the East, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Mohammedan. All of them seem to have arisen, often unexpectedly, from deep immersions of another kind,—in the universe, in nature, in effort, in struggle, in suffering, in joy, —first-hand in that way, and sometimes helped out, as it were, by the study of a book or a Scripture in which the deep immersions of past generations had got themselves authentically recorded.

I am inclined to think that all these, if we follow them far enough, will be found to meet at a single point and come to a focus there—the man who has gone deep into suffering telling the same story as the man who has gone equally deep into joy; the man who has gone deep into nature joining hands with the man who has gone equally deep into himself, the man of action who loses himself in the ringing battlefields of life reaching the selfsame goal which the man of meditation has reached by plunging into the interior silence. But though there is a common meeting point for all of them, that meeting point is not the study of religion. Religion, if I may judge from the genuine examples of it which have come under my notice, is not much given to the study of itself. It has other things to do and is apt

to lose its driving power when it becomes over-solicitous about its own health or its own future. There is even a risk that religion may be studied out of existence.

For that reason I think it doubtful whether a revival of religion is likely to arise from the modern study of it. It may do so, in spite of the fact that past revivals have not arisen in that way; for history seldom repeats itself. But it seems more likely to come from another quarter, from immersion in something else. That deepest point of all, where all the deep immersions meet, may not be far from the point which science has now reached. But we cannot tell. All we can say with certainty is that the revival of religion if ever it comes will arise out of the deeps of experience and not from the surface. If we may judge from the analogy of the past it is likely to come unexpectedly. While the experts are crying "lo here, lo there," it will suddenly break out somewhere else. It has always baffled the experts, so far, and I make no pretense of being wiser than they. It would be quite in accord with the unpredictable ways of religion if, after baffling the experts so far, it were suddenly to change round in their favour and allow them just for once to predict accurately what is going to happen next. Unfortunately their predictions seem to be all at variance, and no man can tell which of them is likely to come true.

In this book I shall not have much to say, directly, about religion, my feeling being that we talk about religion, and argue about it, rather too

much. Many of us, I feel sure, would be more religious than we are if we had studied religion less. But I shall have more to say indirectly. All the contacts with the universe and with one another (and it is of them I shall mainly speak) which have led to religion in the past are open to us today, more widely open than ever before. Indeed our main trouble arises from the very affluence of our opportunities. These contacts are so many and so various that we have no time to follow them far. Our acquaintance with the universe is very wide; but I am afraid it is rather casual, a bowing acquaintance with a multitude of things but a deep acquaintance with few. By the conditions of the time we are compelled to live mainly on the surface and seldom find leisure to immerse ourselves in the deeps. Our contacts with nature, our contacts with society, our contacts with the daily work of our hands, every one of these will be found, if we push beyond it, to be an open door into the heart of reality, into the secret of the universe. It only needs that we go far enough into any form of experience to discover the secret that lies beneath them all; and even if every other door were closed against us there are deep places within *ourselves* always accessible, and enough of them to keep meditation occupied for a lifetime.

Into a few of these meditations, especially of the latter kind, I ask the reader to accompany me in what follows. We shall not advance very far, but something will be gained if we can find the right

direction and satisfy ourselves that the journey is worth pursuing further.

I ask the reader not to expect too much. If he is rash enough to hope that when he lays down this book he will find himself in possession of a fully worked out proof of the existence of God, which no criticism can assail, he will be bitterly disappointed. It is one of the points I shall try to develop later, that all proofs of the existence of God are worthless unless the valour of the soul is present to sustain them. The best of them is no more than a weapon in the hand of a valiant man. And I am disposed to think, though not quite sure, that a valiant man is often better without these weapons than with them. The chief danger of them is that we may become overfond of them, slashing about with them too freely, rattling our theological swords when we ought to be saying our prayers, so that our belief in God goes off into the contentiousness of argument; than which no surer means could be found of destroying religion altogether. His own valour should be weapon enough for any man. At all events he should rely on that rather than on argumentation.

That a valiant man should go entirely unarmed in this dangerous universe my pacifism is not extreme enough to maintain; but armaments are easily overdone, as they were by the knights of old, who armed themselves so heavily that when once they were knocked down assistance had to be sent for to set them upright—the plight of many

theologians today. We may recall a passage in Plato's *Laws* where he declares it to be demoralizing to a State to have a navy, because the land-army is more likely to run away if it knows there is a fleet to fall back on. This also applies to theologians. And then of course the saying that "he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword" has often proved itself true of these intellectual weapons. I do not despise them, but I do not regard them as all-important. God, as I have learnt to think of Him, is one who loves a courageous believer and would rather have all men atheists than all men cowards. In the matter of belief in God, as in all critical matters, the saying holds true that courage is our only security.

II

CATHOLIC AND DENOMINATIONALIST

IF MANKIND were composed exclusively of catholics there would be no church in any city; but every city would be a church, like the New Jerusalem described in Revelation. There would be no parsons, but all men would be priests. There would be no religious books, but all literature would be religious. In schools and colleges no hour would be set apart for religious teaching, but all the teaching given would be teaching in religion. Nobody would call his neighbour religious or even be aware that he was religious himself, unless reminded of it by death, suffering or some terrible joy; but an irreligious person would never be met with. Probably the word "religion" would pass out of use; the saints would be able to get on without it, as the Prophet of Galilee apparently did. The frequent occurrence of the word in modern discussions measures the irreligiousness of the times; this book, for example, in which the word will often occur, could only be written in an age when genuine catholics are few and by an author whose catholicity is imperfect. The genuine catholic avoids the word; or rather it passes him by as one for

which he has no use except in a crisis, a life and death encounter, a tragic interruption or a shock.

For the same reason he seldom mentions the Divine Name, not because he is unaware of God, but because he hears the name spoken by everything that exists and so finds it unnecessary to be repeating it himself. His consciousness of God would be vocal when God was absent; silent when he was present. In normal and peaceful times, when the presence of God was constant, he would sometimes utter the Name in a whisper; but in times of conflict or in moments of abandonment he would lift up his voice in a loud and terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," and send the Name reverberating down the ages.

In this also he resembles the Prophet of Galilee, a genuine catholic according to some (though not all) of the reports, who believed so profoundly in God that he said very little about Him. He resembles also the poet Wordsworth, who, like most of the great poets, was not far from genuine catholicity:

> Think'st thou midst all this mighty sum
> Of things for ever speaking,
> That nothing of itself will come
> But thou must still be seeking?

In the conversation that goes on between him and the Universe, the catholic would listen before speaking, his own contribution consisting chiefly of intimations that he understands and accepts what the Universe is saying to him, and his sermons, of

which he would preach very few, taking the form of exhortations to *listen.* His prayers in like manner would be short. They might all be summed up in the brief formula "I hear and obey," or, if a Latin version be preferred, "Domine, in manus tuas meam animam commisi." Thus, if an age of genuine catholicity were to dawn, an observer who judged only by the hearing of the ear would probably pronounce it atheistic. He would be gravely mistaken.

It is reported that somebody once asked an eminent modern writer why he had never written a book about God. The eminent writer answered, "I have never written a book about anything else." In like manner it is recorded of Carlyle that walking one day with a new minister who had been appointed to the parish where he resided, he admonished his companion as follows, "What this parish needs is somebody who knows God *otherwise than by hearsay.*" The two stories converge to the same point. An age which knows God otherwise than by hearsay will be slow to write books and preach sermons about Him; but whatever books are written and whatever sermons are preached will be about nothing else. Every honest book is a book about God, provided always the writing of it be good, the style forcible, the diction adequate, the thought manly, and the meaning transparently clear. So with every sermon. When these conditions are fulfilled, there is no need whatever to mention the divine Name either in the title,

the chapter headings or the text. A God who cannot be taken for granted is not divine. On the other hand, a book (or a sermon) may announce itself as a theological treatise, and be so advertised in the publishers' circulars, but if the matter of it be obscure and unintelligible, and the manner of it ugly and disordered, it cannot be a book about God. In a genuinely catholic world every theologian would be a skilful workman and every skilful workman would be a theologian, though he might prefer to describe himself otherwise. For the same reason there would be no theological schools, so called; but all schools would be theological without being called so.

A catholic might be otherwise described as one who blesses the Lord with the whole of his being, with "*all* that is within him," like the writer of the 103rd Psalm; with body as well as with mind, with senses as well as with soul; with intellect as well as with will; with work as well as with prayer, with play as well as with work. He dances before the Lord like David and works with him like St. Paul. Body, mind, senses, soul, intellect, will, prayer, work, play, these are the catholic orchestra, whose music is at once a song of gratitude to the Great Soul of the Universe and a trumpet call to the Best that is in man. The voices of nature here blend with the voices of man: the thunder of the mighty deep; the crash of desolating tempests; the hoof beats of the Invisible Ones riding on the wings of the wind; the cataract tumbling from the hills; the young lions roaring after their prey; the

nightingale warbling in the dark. To all this the catholic listens, and sings with it, if he can, like a singer to an accompaniment.

The contrast to the catholic is the man for whom the revelation of the divine, instead of covering the whole field of experience as a universal illumination, and sounding through everything that exists as a universal music, is limited to a part only, and whose dealings with God, instead of demanding the exercise of "all that is within him," demand only the exercise of something that is within him. Him I would call a denominationalist. There is a geographical denominationalism which looks for God in Palestine or in Rome. There is an historical denominationalism, which penetrates no further into the past than the history of this planet at the longest, or the history of the Christian Church at the shortest. There is a theological denominationalism which approaches God only through the medium of professional theology; a moral denominationalism which represents God's interest in the universe as confined to man's behaviour; a human denominationalism which finds God only in man; a social denominationalism which serves God only through social service; a scientific denominationalism which finds God only in the reign of law; an artistic denominationalism whose God is only a Creator; and lastly a spiritual denominationalism whose God is only spirit. Each of these denominationalisms is characterized by its exclusion of the others; takes "only" as its watchword; says of its

chosen path "this way and not that" or "thus far and no farther."

The catholic has none of these exclusions. His parish is the whole universe, both in space and in time. The furthest object detected by a telescope within the depths of space lies well within the borders of his Palestine; his Rome was founded when the morning stars sang together. He founds his religion on history, as the denominationalists do, but, unlike them, nothing will suffice him for historical foundation short of the history which has no beginning and no end. He loves his neighbour, as the denominationalists bid him; but, unlike them, the neighbour he loves is the whole creation in space and time; loves *that* as he loves himself; loves them as one, and finds in that universal love the grand original and vitalizing source of each particular love that stirs him, for man, woman, child, beast, bird, flower or star.

To the catholic, there is no path that feet can tread but leads to a heavenly city, if followed far enough. No, not even the path that leads downward into Hell. That, too, if you keep pushing on, will lead through Purgatory into Paradise, as Dante found, the Descent into Hell preceding the Ascent into Heaven, as one step precedes another.

Nor is Paradise the end. The heavenly city has gates on all sides of it,[1] so that the catholic, entering by one gate will find himself in a *thorough-*

[1] "On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates." Rev. xxi:13.

fare and will push on (after due rest and refreshment) till, emerging into open country on the other side, he strikes the path to a yet Newer Jerusalem, perhaps with another hell to traverse in between, and with the certainty of high adventure on the road; just as the astronomer's telescope, piercing the depths of space, sees the dim light of other worlds beyond the furthest distinguishable star. Your genuine catholic is a traveller through the infinite, never counting himself to have attained the goal of his journey. He settles down in no city, not even in the New Jerusalem, but only rests there and gathers strength for the next venture into the illimitable unknown. His ends are all *inns*.

Here we light upon the deepest characteristic of the catholic mind. While his intellect demands unending space for its vision, his will demands unending time for its activity, and his intellect, which involves the will in its highest exercise, enforces the will's demand. He is no mere spectator of time; for in that case he would be apart from it, and time would be nothing other than space. He is *in* time, and time in him; a participator in time, a child of it, an exponent of its living duration. A finished universe, a finished creation, a finished truth, a finished man, a finished self are all, to him, unthinkable and meaningless. As nature abhors a vacuum so the catholic abhors the idea of *arrest*. He is incapable of regarding himself as a terminable episode. At the "last" moment of his existence as at the "first" he is in the time stream of

an immortal universe, borne onwards by its current to what awaits him next. Final words are for the denominationalist. They are not in the catholic's vocabulary. For him there is no wisdom save that which *goes on* working wisely, no knowledge save that which *goes on* knowing; no truth, no beauty, no goodness save that which *goes on* moulding the world to its own pattern. All things, all thoughts, all selves are time-filled and dynamic. Even the "final" word provokes an answer; the answer is more final than it; and so on for ever and ever.

The catholic mind is often described as "all-embracing." And so indeed it is. But embraces are of many kinds. There is the static embrace of a circle drawn on a sheet of paper, whose circumference lies inertly round the space enclosed within it. Wholly different from this is the dynamic embrace of living arms, which hug the object embraced as though they would incorporate it with the body to which they belong—the embrace of the lover that peoples the world, the embrace of the wrestler crying to his antagonist "I will not let thee go until thou bless me." It is thus that the catholic mind embraces the All of Things, which is alive like itself. The embrace is reciprocal.

Yet even so the catholic mind is but half described. To do it justice we must name it "thorough-going" as well as "all-embracing." It goes *through*, as well as round. Hell, Purgatory and Paradise are next to nothing when merely "em-

braced" in a vision—hearsays at most. You must *pass through them as stages of a journey* if you would know them as they really are. Known only in the space pictures of your vision, but unknown in the time current of the inner man, they are known not at all. To the catholic his "view of the universe," even though all space and time were visibly included within it, would mean nothing unless his *passage through it* enabled him to interpret what he sees. He knows *life* because he has walked through the valley of the shadow of *death*, Nature because he has exerted himself in her company, God because he has wrestled with Him all night long. Had a choice to be made between "thoroughness" and "all-embracingness," as best denoting the catholic mind, my vote would be given to the first.

III

POPE SIGHT AND HIS TYRANNIES

SOME years ago I was present while a series of "intelligence tests" was being carried out in a boys' school. One of the tests turned on "quickness of observation." The boys were sent for two minutes into an adjoining room furnished with all sorts of things, then brought back and required to write out lists of the objects they had observed in the room.

The lists, of course, varied greatly in length, the quickest boys mentioning as many as forty objects, the slowest not more than ten.

But the most interesting result of the experiment lay on the negative side—not in the differing capacity of the boys to observe certain things but in the inability of the whole group to observe certain other things. To begin with nothing was noted down by any of the boys, not even by the quickest, except the objects which revealed themselves to the *eye*. Things visible monopolized the list; things audible, tactual, olfactory were unnoted. The noises that came in from the street; the sounds made by the boys as they moved about the room; the music of a piano in a distant part of the build-

ing; the air and the temperature; the floor, resisting the weight of the body; the scent of a cigar (purposely introduced)—not one of these appeared in any of the lists. Even among visible objects there were some curious omissions. Out of thirty boys only two had noted their own bodies, or their companions', as objects in the room.

Later on the same experiment was tried on the experimenters themselves, among whom there were two or three trained psychologists, a turn of the tables much to be recommended for experts who apply "intelligence tests" to children. Here too the result, though not quite so one-sided as in the case of the children, showed a high degree of observancy in the department of vision and relative inobservancy in the others.

A more remarkable omission has still to be noted. Of the six observers who submitted to the second test, each producing an extensive list of visible objects in the room, only one mentioned the *light* which made the objects visible. Keen as their powers of visual observation were, these trained observers, with a single exception, had overlooked the one *thing* which renders visual observation possible—the light of day, for it was daytime when the experiment was made. They were taking what Fechner calls a "day view" of the world as contained within the walls of the room; but they overlooked the "day," children and experts alike. Had it been night time, with artificial lights burning, these would probably have been noted; as it was the

apparatus for producing light, electric switches, etc., appeared on most of the lists. All the more remarkable that light itself was overlooked.

The conclusion to be drawn from such instances, which might be multiplied endlessly, is that man, even scientific man, is a *biassed observer of the universe*. He is biassed in favour of the sense of sight, finding that most real which sight reveals to him and that less real which is revealed by the other senses, even to the extent of hardly being able to notice it, or to deem it worthy of notice, so strong is the insistence of the visible object.

As observers most of us are narrow-minded denominationalists. We belong to the sight denomination, accepting nothing as real which fails to conform to our shibboleth "seeing is believing," in which respect we differ but little from the dogs, who belong to the smell denomination with "smelling is believing" for the touchstone of truth and the pathway to Reality. Our bodily organization, which might have been other than it is, has given to sight a Pope-like primacy without whose imprimatur the testimony of the other senses lacks the authority of orthodox truth—which must be actually visible or translatable into terms of visual imagery, so that "we see it" has become a synonym for "we understand it"—just as "we smell it" would be to the dogs.

If we turn to the universe as a whole, and enquire into the meaning of it, sight still holds our minds in chains. The creation is a *spectacle*, we the

spectators of it, and our philosophy a "*view* of the universe." We "view" it, for example, as a system of relations, visualizing the system in pattern form as an enormous diagram of interconnected points outspread on the blue-print of space; and "seeing" it thus we "understand" it, or think we do. All mechanical theories of the universe have originated in this manner. To a mind dominated by visual imagery no other type of theory is even conceivable.

But what a revolution there would be if Pope Hearing took the place of Pope Sight and reduced him to second in command! All "views of the universe" would collapse, and Hume's "impartial and disinterested spectator" would find his occupation gone. "Views" and "points of view"; "standpoints" and "points" in general; "attitudes"; "lines of approach"; "connecting links"; "ends" and a thousand such like terms, indispensable in a sight-interpreted universe, would now be banished from philosophical literature and used only by poets in the most daring of their flights. Whether the word "problem" would survive is doubtful; but certainly the particular problem of the relation of matter to mind would be heard of no more. Instead of that we should be asking "what is the relation of noise to music?" and the grand question would be "is the universe a fortuitous concourse of noises or an ordered symphony of tones?"

That a sound-interpreted universe would be utterly different from the universe as it now confronts

us is certain; nor is there any reason to think that it would be less "real." But when we ask ourselves what would such a universe be *like* we can only answer by constructing some sort of *sight* picture, or visualized scene, in which the actors appear as visible objects on a visible stage, forgetting that under the conditions supposed actors, actions, stage and surrounding scenery would all have become sound objects. It is all very well to say that in such a universe men would listen to things instead of looking at them (like Keats in his "Ode to the Nightingale" or Wordsworth hearing "the mighty waters rolling evermore") or would spend their holidays in sound-hearing rather than sight-seeing, or would use microphones in their laboratories where they now use microscopes, telephones in their observatories where they now use telescopes, and debate among themselves whether the sound of the universe was a self-made noise or a created symphony, the work of a cosmic barrel-organ or a living organist. But what does this mean when we add, as we must, that under the conditions supposed the listeners themselves, the things they listened to, the places they travelled in, the laboratories, the microphones, the telephones, the barrel-organs and the organists would all be sound entities? It only remains to add that just as we can make nothing of a world under the reign of Pope Hearing, so its inhabitants would be able to make nothing of a world under the reign of Pope Sight and would find our sight-seeing philosophers, with their Welt-

anschauungs, or "views" of the universe, their attitudes, their standpoints, and their other points, quite unintelligible.

Our present bodily organization suggests the possibility of as many different worlds as can be made out of the permutations and combinations of the number five, each under the dominance of one or other of our principal senses, each with its own philosophical vernacular, each with its own standard of reality and governed by methods of interpretation peculiar to itself. That many such worlds actually exist, each under its appropriate Pope, a study of the lower forms of life leaves little doubt. Some animals live in a touch world; some in a sound world; some in a smell world; some in a taste world; and our noble selves in a sight world; though what those other worlds are "like" God only knows or can know. Each, to those who live in it, would be as real as ours is to us. If an animal has only one sense the world will mean to him just what that sense enables him to discover and reflect upon—if reflective powers are his. If he has several, one of the group will dominate and the others will bring their experience to it to be interpreted and given it a place in the universe.

The experience of persons born blind will convince anyone who consults it that the blind man's world, though equally real, is widely different from his own, so different, indeed, as to be virtually another world, of which it must be said again that only God (and the blind) knows what it is *like.*

With one such, a man of exceptional intelligence and a gifted musician, I once had a remarkable conversation. He had been trying to explain to me that his world was primarily a world of sound with a tendency to form itself into music, even touches, pressures and physical contacts in general having a kind of sound value—statements grammatically intelligible but otherwise well-nigh meaningless to me. It then occurred to me to try an experiment. One of the greatest poems in our language, Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," had always seemed to me the voice of a *sound-world*, into which the poet, at a white heat of intuition, had immersed himself, so as to touch reality in what he heard, rather than in what he saw. Accordingly I procured a Braille copy of the poem and asked the blind man to read it. At the conclusion his remark was "Keats, when he made that poem, was living in my world." On another occasion, when the conversation turned on religion, he made a remark to the effect that language about "the vision of God" naturally meant very little to him; "but there is one verse in the Psalms," he added, "which puts it my way: 'thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thine hand upon me.' " The idea he was trying to convey was that God to him was a felt pressure. Is not Matthew Arnold's "Power not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" something of the same kind? And would not theologians in general be more convincing if their language were less dominated by visual imagery and their minds more open to the existence

of "other worlds" than that revealed to us by the sense of sight?

The catholic thinks so. As against the denominationalist, with his sight-world and his sight shibboleths, his impoverished vocabulary and his narrow-minded contact with the divine, the catholic smells God in every scented flower, tastes Him with the Psalmist, hears Him with Keats and Wordsworth, touches Him with the blind man, feels His pressure making for righteousness with Matthew Arnold, and believes with the sage that "worlds without end lie enfolded one within another like the petals of a rose." Of these endless worlds, the sight world is the one which he happens to be visiting for a few years, but he hears the "mighty waters" of another "rolling evermore" on the shores of this. He is no one-world man. The fully real is the living totality of them all.

IV

THE WHOLE MAN

AMONG the many definitions of religion which have been attempted in modern times, none has attracted more attention or been more widely discussed than that given by Professor Whitehead in his little book *Religion in the Making*. "Religion," he says, "is what a man does with his own solitariness." The familiarity of this definition and the weight of Professor Whitehead's authority make it a convenient starting point for what I have to say in this chapter.

I hesitate to differ from so eminent a thinker. But the difference refers rather to the words he has chosen than the thought which seems to me to have inspired them. We may be very sure that Professor Whitehead means what he says, but I have a doubt whether he has said, in this definition, quite all that he means. My justification for the doubt is derived from Professor Whitehead himself.

When we penetrate deeper into his thought we find that religion, as he presents it, involves not only what a man does with his own solitariness but what he does with other people's solitariness as well. As I read the book in which he offers this definition, I become conscious that he is doing some-

thing with *my* solitariness. He is helping me to escape from it. He is showing me how to deal with it in such a way that it ceases to be a terror and a burden and becomes the growing point for a life of free communion with my fellow men, with the universe and with God. This attack on my solitariness, for which I am profoundly grateful to the writer of the book, seems to be going on from first to last.

There is a paradox about all this. If religion were simply a man's solitariness, and Professor Whitehead says it is in the next paragraph, nobody but himself would ever know it. His religion would be a secret he could never divulge. But as soon as he divulges his secret and invites others to share his solitude, either by writing a book about it as Professor Whitehead does or by making a poem about it as Matthew Arnold did, he breaks up his own solitude and at the same time makes a forced entry into the solitude of the readers to whom he addresses himself. This is a point which writers on solitude are apt to overlook. If religion is defined as what a man does with his solitariness, morality, I think, would have to be defined as what he does with the solitariness of other people. He breaks it up. He visits them in their lonely dungeons, rescues them from their abandonment, goes after the lost sheep until he finds it, and persuades them that they are *not* alone. In morality we share our neighbour's solitude and invite him to share ours, thereby destroying the solitude on both sides. This seems to be involved in loving our

neighbour as we love ourselves, and Kant's famous principle which bids us treat him as "an end in himself" comes to pretty much the same thing.

I cannot help thinking therefore that Professor Whitehead has framed this definition in a way which leaves it open to misunderstanding, and judging by some of the comments that have been made upon it, there is no doubt that it has been misunderstood. We are so accustomed to the practice of dissecting human nature, of dividing it up into various parts and faculties and functions, that when we hear our solitariness spoken of we are apt to think of it as some part of our experience that we can separate out from the rest. We think of it as a silent and empty room in the house of life, side by side with other rooms, which are not empty but filled with the voices of our fellow men and of nature. If now we ask ourselves what can we do with this empty room, this patch of loneliness in the midst of our sociability, the answer is that we can do nothing. And the reason is that the lonely patch does not exist.

But though the definition has often been taken in this way I feel sure that its author would refuse to sanction any such interpretation of it. If a man is lonely at all—and there is a deep sense in which all of us are so—his loneliness is a condition of *his whole being*, and not a thing that exists in the hidden places of his nature like a lonely tarn in the recesses of a mountain range. Therefore I venture to think that we should be nearer to what Pro-

fessor Whitehead really means if we were to say that religion is what a man does with his *wholeness*, what he does with the totality of his being, what he does with his entire self, the self-dedication of the whole man, body and mind together, to whatever may have been revealed to him as Highest and Most Excellent. If a man would do anything with his solitariness he must do something with his whole personality, and something quite definite.

It is not until we think of a man in his wholeness that we begin to see what is meant by his solitariness. His wholeness and his solitariness are almost two names for the same thing. By having a separate body he is cut off from all other men, and all other objects in the universe, left, so to speak, all to himself. But being a mind as well as a body he can do something with his loneliness; he can overcome it; he can destroy it; he can make himself one in heart and will with others who are lonely like himself. He can do more; he can identify himself with the vital forces of the universe and so enter into communion with God. Whatever a man does with his loneliness it is always the whole man, and not a part of him, that does it, and the whole man to whom it is done. Religion means nothing unless the weight of the whole man lies behind it. It is the act of his whole personality; a continuous act; the continuous dedication of himself as an entirety, making him a social being and a religious being at the same time—no affair of mere acceptance but a creative act continually renewed.

Accordingly I look for the sources of religion not in any intellectual proposition as to the nature of God, or of the universe, important as these may be at a later stage. I look rather to the vitality and vigour of the whole man. This vitality and vigour are not his private possessions. He draws them from the great reservoirs of the universe to which he belongs, so that in dedicating himself to the Highest he may be said to have the strength of the entire universe at his back.

All religious revivals come from that source. They are not brought about by ingenious accommodations of religion and science nor by any other intellectual artifice we may devise. They betoken an influx of power into human life and come inevitably when the aims of life are in harmony with the vital currents of the universe, but not otherwise.

This influx of power must not be thought of as operating in some particular channel of human nature specially designed for the reception of spiritual forces, or as affecting only what goes on in the study of the theologian or in churches and chapels. The energy it brings is for the whole man in the totality of his human nature, and runs out into every department of his activity, quickening him at all points as an actor in the drama of the universe, in science, in art, in philosophy, in literature, in the quality of his daily labour and the temper of his intercourse with his fellows. When "power from on high" visits the world, as I think it does whenever the world is worthy of it, its first point of im-

pact is not always in the churches and chapels, not always in the study of the theologians, though of course it may be. It bloweth where it listeth and gets in through the first open door, which is just as likely to be the door of a scientific laboratory as the door of a church, and more likely if the people inside the laboratory are seeking the truth and the people inside the church are not. But wherever the power gets in, the energy of it will presently permeate to the remotest corners of the house and the response to it will come from the whole man, body and mind together.

In all our efforts to penetrate to the sources of religion and to understand what religion is I deem it of the utmost importance to keep this conception of the whole man steadily in view. And to get the conception of his wholeness right we must think of the man not only as he exists visibly in space, as an object complete and fully rounded off in the field of vision. We must think of him also as he goes on invisibly existing in *time* through the days and the years, a continuous stream of self-conscious being flowing on between two silent eternities, one behind his birth and the other beyond his death. His religion, if he has it, is what he does with *all that*, not to be defined by any port he has arrived at but by the course he steers, by the direction in which his whole being moves continuously forward. If you would find out what a man's religion really is do not ask him "what have you arrived at?": ask him rather "where are you going?" His points of

arrival, the conclusions he has come to, in theology or philosophy, have little significance unless he is using them as points of departure to what lies beyond.

This time aspect of our wholeness is easily forgotten. We think of our days as though they succeeded on another like the ticks of a clock, or the rapid pictures of the cinema. But they are not like that. There is a theme running through them, like the theme of a musical composition, giving direction to the movement of it, always the same and yet repeating itself in a thousand different forms. That theme is *the whole man*, not his reason, not his faith, not his creed, not even his mind as apart from his body, nor his body as apart from his mind, but always himself in the wholeness of his being, with all his imperfections and confusions. His very handwriting, if an omniscient eye were to read it, would become a revelation of his personality and an epitome of his history up-to-date.

If a man swims in the water it is the whole man who swims and not merely his swimming apparatus, the rest of him being left ashore. If a man walks on the earth it is the whole man who walks and not his legs only, the rest of him being left at home. Swimming in the water and walking on the earth are not the same. But they have this in common—that the whole man is active in both of them; you might call them variations on the theme of his wholeness. And so with his total biography, written or unwritten as the case may be. His biography

is the record of the variations he has played on the theme of his wholeness, of what he has done with his wholeness, now in this contest and now in that. I have read some bad biographies which make a patchwork of the man they are written about, a bit of him in this chapter and another bit of him in that, mere inventories of what the man did and said at different periods of his life, sewn together within the two covers of a book like an auctioneer's catalogue: such biographies are a disgrace to literature. Unless a biography shows you the whole man doing something with his wholeness in every chapter, it is untrue.

The question is *what* has he done with it? No doubt he has done a thousand different things at different times. But what is the summary thing that he has been doing all the time? Get at that and you will get at his religion. He may have surrendered his wholeness to the meanest ends; in which case his religion will have to be defined in terms of the God he has served—the Golden Calf or whatever else his deity may be. Or he may have dedicated it to the pursuit of the highest excellence he knows of: in which case the name of that highest excellence will be the name of his God. Professor Whitehead himself has told us that "religion is not always a good thing; it may be a very bad thing." On his own definition of religion it must be so, for a man often does with his solitariness that which he had better not to.

V

PATCHWORK CONCEPTIONS OF MAN

THERE is a kind of religion which consists in the symbolic transaction known as "selling oneself to the devil," falling down and worshipping him as a price paid for the kingdoms of this world. But the devil, when he buys a man, always bargains for the whole of him, mind and body all in one. We cannot sell ourselves to the devil in lots. He buys the whole estate or nothing. The mind of a man is of no use to the devil without his body, and his body of no use without his mind. He is wiser at that point than some of his opponents, who separate the mind from the body, make them the objects of separate cultures and separate valuations. He treats mind and body as the indissoluble unity they really are. It seems to me a curious fact that we acknowledge this wholeness when the service of evil is in question, but forget it when we are thinking about the service of the Good. The villain needs his body to commit his crimes; we never forget that, and hang his body by the neck to show that we have remembered it. But the saint needs a body no less to sustain his virtues, and that is often over-

looked. He may give his body to be burned. But how could he do that if he had no body to give?

In that strange poem the "Anatomy of the World" written by John Donne in the early part of the seventeenth century, there is a passage which reveals a remarkable insight into the indissoluble unity of mind and body. The poet has before him the figure of an animated young girl, and thus describes her:

> Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
> That one might almost say "her body thought."

Mr. Graham Wallas, who quotes these lines in his admirable book on *The Art of Thought*, adds to them another quotation from the psychologist, Dr. Watson. "A whole man," says Watson, "thinks with his whole body in each and every part." And quite recently, on visiting an institution in America where physical culture has been raised to the level of a fine art, and where I had been greatly impressed by the dignity and beauty of the results, I was informed by the instructor in charge that the system was based on the principle of training the students to think *with their whole bodies*. "Our system," said the instructor, "is the coeducation of mind and body. We treat mind and body as a unit, and by so doing we achieve mental and physical culture at the same time. We kill the two birds with one stone, and find that students who have been trained in this manner pass on easily and readily to

cultural interests of a more special kind in art, science and literature." It was one of the unusual features of this institution that it had attached to it a kind of sanctuary, a place of great beauty, where no "services" were held and no sermons preached, but where every student who felt the need of inspiration in the course of his work might retire at any time for silent meditation or prayer. I learnt that many of them, without solicitation or pressure, would be finding their way into this place at all hours and using it for the purpose for which it was intended. I could not help connecting this with the principle of educating a man in his wholeness, not as a mind only, requiring mental culture, nor as a body only, requiring physical culture, but as an inseparable unity of the two in which the right culture of the one was also the right culture of the other; and there passed before me the vision of a vast reform in our educational system, from which religion, which always involves the whole man, might arise spontaneously.

At the present time we are suffering from a plague of patchwork conceptions of human nature. Our minds are haunted by a host of false abstractions, so numerous, so insistent and so deeply imbedded in common speech, that only with great difficulty can we work our way to the whole man whom these abstractions have dismembered. On opening a book of psychology we find our nature divided up into a patchwork of faculties and

functions, and though every competent psychologist knows very well that these divisions are purely artificial, the effect of his analysis is to make us blind to the unity which underlies them all, the unity of the whole man. Turning to works on philosophy, the same confusion is apt to overpower us. We read of a religious consciousness which has to do with religion, of a moral consciousness which has to do with morality, of a perceptual consciousness that has to do with the external world; we find intuition set over against intellect; reason set over against faith; reason itself divided into the Pure and the Practical—until at last we completely lose sight of the whole man, without whom none of these abstractions means anything at all.

At the head of them stands the division between mind and body, a division so inveterate that we are tempted into endless discussions about the relations between the two, only to discover at the end of our labours that we have been quarrelling about the meaning of two abstract terms. Unfortunately we are in the grip of a very old and powerful tradition, which has its origin in the conception of matter as something essentially vile, and of the mind as something essentially divine, a separate creation which has somehow got itself hitched on to a material partner immeasurably inferior to itself—a conception which has left a deep mark on the whole of our Western culture, and is responsible, I think, for our main difficulties in presenting a spiritual interpretation of the universe.

How deeply confused our thinking has become at this point is shown by the multitude of metaphors, all of them misleading, which start to our tongues whenever mind and body are under discussion. Sometimes the body is spoken of as a house which the mind inhabits; sometimes as a garment that it wears, "a muddy vesture of decay" as Shakespeare calls it; sometimes as a tool or instrument which the mind makes use of; sometimes as an enemy which it has to resist; sometimes, again, as an invisible essence which our skins prevent from escaping into the outer air, like gas in a balloon. To pierce through this cloud of metaphors to the whole man whom they all obscure is no easy task.

I hold no brief for the philosophy known as humanism. But when philosophy goes to the opposite extreme and allows itself to become completely dehumanized, as it inevitably does when the whole man is overlaid by patchwork conceptions of his nature, it immediately gives birth to a tangle of insoluble problems, becomes a mere dispute as to the arrangement of abstract terms and earns the reputation, not undeserved under the circumstances, of a sterile pursuit. What a mind may be without a body nobody knows and will never get any nearer to knowing, no matter how thoroughly he analyses the conception. What a body is without a mind everybody thinks he knows; the usual name for it is a corpse. But man was not created by first making a corpse and then putting a mind inside it, though

there are certain theories of creation which suggest that it was done in some such way.

The times are favourable for recovering the conception of the whole man. Recent investigations into the nature of matter are, indeed, beyond the scope of this book. But one thing can be said of them with confidence. Their total effect has been to reduce the opposition between the spiritual and the material worlds, which has so long dominated our thinking and produced a host of questions which nobody can answer. The opposition between mind and matter is rapidly disappearing, if it has not already disappeared. The idea of matter as something essentially vile, as mere comminuted dirt—that at least has become a patent absurdity. If this is so, and I feel convinced it is, all the "problems" which the philosophy of religion has to face will be set in another and far more promising field and the whole of our culture will undergo a profound modification. Donne's image of the young girl whose beautiful animation was such that her whole body seemed to be thinking will expand into an image of the universe. Of that too, in its immensity, we shall then be able to say, as we say sometimes even now, when the divine beauty of it all flashes before us, "its body thinks." And with this the way will be opened to a vast reform, the coeducation of mind and body—the higher education of the whole man.

VI

THINKING, VITAL AND MECHANICAL

WHEN I look back on the various philosophers whose writings I have studied, and to whose teaching I owe any philosophy I possess, it seems to me that I can divide them into two clearly distinguishable classes. I name them respectively the space thinkers and the time thinkers—the one dominated by the idea of space, the other by the idea of time.

To some extent the two classes overlap. The greatest philosophers think in both ways, but even they can be distinguished from one another according as space or time has the stronger influence over their thought. Among the lesser philosophers there are many who think in one way only; and when one way only is followed it is almost certain to be space. A pure time thinker is hard to find. But space thinkers almost pure, though perhaps not quite, are common enough. Occasionally one meets a thinker, but not of the highest order, who is positively space-ridden, his mind completely in bondage to the imagery and the language derived from space, while the other side of his mind which ought to be alive to the significance of time is apparently

out of action altogether, as though it were under an anaesthetic.

Outside the range of philosophers there is the person whom we know as the plain man. We sometimes talk of the plain man as though he were precisely the same kind of person two thousand years ago as he is today. This I am convinced is a serious mistake. There is no human type which has changed its characteristics in the course of history more profoundly than the plain man; I doubt if even the philosophers have changed as much as he. The plain men of Chaucer's day differed widely from the plain men of our own, as anyone will realize who reads the *Canterbury Tales*, though of course there is much in common between the two; and the plain men who figure in the Bible differ yet more from the plain men who read their Bibles in the twentieth century. Most of the plain men of old lived in the country; today they live mostly in cities, and that alone makes an enormous difference to the quality of their plainness. Whenever the plain man is appealed to for settling a controversy, the date at which he is supposed to have lived should always be mentioned. It should also be stated whether he was a plain man of the country or of the town, for the countryman is usually the plainer of the two. "The plain man" must not be confused with "the man in the street." The latter is a highly sophisticated person whose knowledge is mostly "hearsay." The "street" has made it so, and though it may be commercially profitable to study

his tastes it does not follow that religion should be adjusted to his ideas or morality to his standards. The shepherds of Chaldea were "plain men" and knew God "otherwise than by hearsay." But they were not "men in the street."

Unless I am much mistaken, the difference between the plain men of old and those of our own time is precisely the difference I have made use of in distinguishing the two classes of philosophers. The plain men of old were more inclined to time thinking than their modern counterparts, less liable to yield themselves captive to the seductions of space. Living in the country had something to do with this—because, if you live in the country and earn your living by tilling the soil you must attend not only to the visible face of nature as you see it in space, but still more to those invisible forces below the surface and behind the scenes which do their work in time. But ever since the birth, or the rebirth, of the positive sciences, with their mechanical applications, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the drift of civilization has been away from the country towards the city, and the consequence is that mechanical science, which maintains our great cities and is founded on space, gets into the head of the city dweller and over-develops the space thinking side of him. For that reason alone it is very important, when appealing to the plain man to settle our controversies, to state clearly whether it is the plain man of the country or the plain man of the city, the plain man of old or the

plain man of today, to whom we are appealing. The two will give us different verdicts about the same thing, the one judging it as a thinker in time and the other as a thinker in space. The man of the country, the time thinker, will ask first "how long will the thing *last*?": the man of the city, the space thinker, will ask first "what does the thing *look like*?" If it is civilization we are talking about, we must remember that a rural civilization will judge the value and the meaning of life differently from an urban. It remains to add that the chief difference between the plain man and the philosopher is, or ought to be, that the latter is the plainer of the two. He shares the transparency of God, in whose light he sees light.

So far as I know, the distinction I have drawn between the space thinker and the time thinker has not yet been sanctioned by usage in the high places of philosophy. The difference is more usually expressed in the distinction between mechanical thinking, corresponding to space, and vital thinking, corresponding to time. In what immediately follows I shall consider it under this nomenclature.

At the outset, however, it is important to note that thinking, whatever be the form it assumes, vital, mechanical or any other, never goes on *in vacuo*, never floats unattached in the general air of the times, like a derelict balloon with nobody on board to control it, but is always definitely guided by some individual thinker, whose personality it

expresses and affirms. The habit so many of us have of discussing systems of philosophy as though they owed everything to their logical construction, and nothing whatever to the personalities of the men who construct them, is, I think, highly objectionable, often leading us to overlook the very thing which gives the system its cogency and driving-power, the personality of the author—as I shall try to show more fully later on. No matter whose system we are studying, Plato's, Spinoza's, Spencer's, Bergson's or any other, it is a good rule, and one to which I would attach the utmost importance, never to lose sight of the man on board the ship, of the captain in control of the system, but to study him closely, noting his nationality, his age and date, his upbringing and education, his parentage and his personal characteristics—never, in short, to allow our study of any man's thought to get divorced from our study of the *whole* man whose thought it is. So, in what follows, you will observe that I am not treating vitalism and mechanism as abstract theories floating about in the intellectual atmosphere of the time, but as personal self-affirmations made by men of like nature with ourselves, to whom we can give definite names and dates and pick out from all other men in the world.

In mechanical thinking the object aimed at is logical conclusiveness, and logical conclusiveness is a thing not to be despised by anybody. In vital thinking, on the other hand, while logical conclusiveness is not despised, the vigour of the thinking,

the valour of it, the creative skill of it are the outstanding features. Your vital thinker will sharpen the point of his spear with all the means that logic supplies him with, but he will take care to aim his spear at a target, and not into the air, and he will hurl it with all his force. In mechanical thinking the attention is naturally occupied with the working of the logical machine, which is as wonderful in its own way as the machinery of a battleship or of Mr. Ford's factory. In vital thinking, on the other hand, the chief concern is with quality of the goods, that is, of the thought turned out. To understand the mechanical thinker we must not assume that he is always thinking about mechanism, but only that he tends to think mechanically about whatever is before him, the effect being to turn it into a kind of machine. In the same way the vital thinker is not always thinking about vitality, but he thinks vitally, and this again has the effect of vitalizing the object of his thought.

Suppose, for example, we are dealing with a social system, inventing a new one, or reconstructing the one that now exists. The mechanical thinker will be satisfied when he has worked out a symmetrical pattern of the new society, in which all the classes and all the individuals are placed in the exact positions a logical justice requires, all the relationships between man and man just what they logically ought to be. But the vital thinker, before inspecting the pattern, will ask these questions—"What kind of people are these whose fates you

are deciding? Are they valiant people? Are they people in high condition or in low condition? Are they A 1's or C 3's? Are they the kind of people who, when you have set them going on the right road, have the courage and sense to *keep* going, or are they the kind who presently turn round and go another way?" These are the questions the vital thinker asks *first*, and until you have satisfied him on these points the symmetry of the pattern, perfect though it be, will not convince him that the problem has been solved.

In our own time the two writers who have done most to stimulate vital thinking are probably William James and Henri Bergson. They at least are the two writers from whom I have myself learnt more about this matter than from anybody else. Of the two my debt is greater I think to Bergson than to James, though it is very great to him also. Bergson's conception of the ultimate reality as a vital impulse (*élan vital*) which we understand, not by looking at it, or inspecting it, but by immersing ourselves in the current of it, so that our thinking becomes vitalized by the very thing we are thinking about, seems to me of permanent value. And yet I must confess that both these thinkers, greatly as I am indebted to them, seem at times to be overdoing their parts. In their attempt to release our minds from their bondage to mechanical thinking they press their attacks upon it so hard as to leave the impression that mechanical thinking has no value at all, which is cer-

tainly far from being true, though not what either of them really means. But exaggeration of that kind is almost inevitable and can be easily pardoned in such a case. Whenever you are fighting a battle, especially if it happens to be a philosophical battle, the tendency always is to run down the merits of your enemy more than he deserves. The ideal thinker would do justice to both elements, the mechanical as well as the vital, though I am not sure that he would place them on an equality.

One thinker who came very near to giving both sides their due, and resolutely tried to do so, was Lotze. Lotze maintained that mechanism was present throughout the entire universe, but always with a subordinate function, always under the control and direction of something that is not mechanical. Another name, also German, brings us even nearer to the ideal, the name of one who is known to the world rather as a poet than a philosopher—I mean, of course, the great Goethe. Goethe had an eminently scientific mind; had he devoted himself exclusively to science he might have become one of the greatest among the scientists of all ages. But in him the mind of the scientist was united with the mind of a poet—a very rare and precious combination. He was a creator as well as an investigator, and as a creator his thinking became vital to a degree which mere investigation could never have produced. Creativeness and vitality go together.

Among mechanical thinkers the one who strikes me as the purest example of the type, among Brit-

ish philosophers, is Herbert Spencer. His mind was a great logical machine, so beautifully constructed that it deserves to be reckoned among the most marvellous works of the Creator, so marvellous indeed that one can hardly understand how such a contrivance can ever have come into existence by mere chance. I would even say, though it is only in passing, that if I wanted to prove the existence of God by pointing to the wonderful mechanisms that exist in the world I should not point, as Paley did, to things that resemble watches and infer from their ingenious construction that a God must have made them, I should point to the infinitely more marvellous mechanism of a logical mind like Spencer's, and I should ask—who made that? No watch that I have ever seen can be compared in the matter of ingenuity with the highest types of the mechanical mind. Not that I wish to prove the existence of God in this way, for it is unconvincing anyhow, but if mechanism is to be the test, mechanical thinking is the realm where the finest examples of it are to be found. Spencer is certainly one of them, and I revere him profoundly as one of the teachers of my youth. Logical conclusiveness is what he always aims at, setting us all an admirable example in that respect. At the same time he reveals the limitations of his method by overdoing his part, just as James and Bergson sometimes overdo theirs, his logical conclusions being pushed so far that they become false for that very reason. Aristotle, who was the founder of logic, was also the author of

that famous principle known as the doctrine of "the Mean," the doctrine that wisdom is to be found at a middle point between two extremes. But so far as I know Aristotle never applied his doctrine of the Mean to the Logic of which he was the founder, but left us to go to what extremes we will in the matter of being logical. I think we can go too far in that as in everything else.

VII

CERTAINTY AND VALUE

THERE is another way of describing the distinction between mechanical and vital thinking, possibly more helpful than the foregoing, though it comes to the same in the long run.

The mechanical thinker, while not indifferent to the values of life, or not necessarily so, lays the stress not on value but on *certainty*. The vital thinker, on the other hand, while not indifferent to certainty, lays the stress on *value*. The mechanical thinker may be said to derive his judgment of value from his judgment of certainty. The vital thinker takes it the other way round, deriving his judgment of certainty from his judgment of value. He begins by asking what is the *Best*, and having found what he thinks the *Best*, he derives his notion of what is most certain from that. Plato adopted this method in ancient times and is the great teacher of all who have adopted it ever since, probably the most influential mind the human race has ever produced. In modern times an outspoken sanction of the same method was given by the poet Keats, whose philosophy—for he had a philosophy beneath his poetry—was founded on the judgment that Beauty is the Best in the universe; from which

it followed, as his well-known saying tells us, that "Beauty is truth, truth Beauty—that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know." The value that he found in Beauty was thus the source of whatever certainty he found in life.

But that kind of thing doesn't go down with your Herbert Spencers. They have no use for Plato with his idea of the Good, or Keats with his idea of the Beautiful, until they have satisfied themselves by a well-considered argument, that the Good and the Beautiful have a real existence apart from the moods and fancies of those who talk about them. They must have Truth first; and Truth for them always means logical conclusiveness.

At this point a very pretty controversy breaks out between the vital and the mechanical thinkers as to what Truth really is; the mechanical side contending that Truth is always found in the form of a *conclusion*, in which the mind comes finally to rest; which the others deny, affirming that Truth is a *line of direction* in which the mind moves forward on an endless journey, and not a resting place where the journey ends; the mechanists interpreting truth in terms of rest and the vitalists in terms of movement. Truth is thus a final certainty to the one party and an open road to the other.

Putting all this in language more human, we may say that the vital party are more interested in the joys of life, and of course the sorrows as well, than they are in the certainties of life; while the mechanists are more interested in the certainties

than in the joys and sorrows. Not that either side is wholly blind to what the other is contending for; but they approach the matter from opposite ends; the mechanists maintaining that joys and sorrows are foolish unless you can find a logical justification for them; the vitalists maintaining that unless a conclusion is strong enough to bear the weight of the world's joys and sorrows it cannot be true. No doubt the vitalists, in their contention, run some risk of logical weakness, but then we must remember that just because of their vitality they are the kind of people not easily daunted by a risk. And we must remember also that the mechanists, on their side, are not without risks of their own. There is always the risk of their own fallibility. The logic they apply may be infallible; but *they* are not infallible in their applications of it. They encounter a very great risk at that point. Faultless as their logic be, considered as science, their application of it may be faulty in the extreme. They may have chosen the wrong occasion for its use, or applied it to something to which it cannot be applied.

Of all men in the world the logician ought to be the most careful in the application of his science. Just because the weapon he carries is a deadly one he needs to remember his own fallibility in the use of it. If he forgets his fallibility, or pretends that because his weapon is infallible *he* is infallible also, then I can only say that prudent people will give him as wide a berth as possible. When we are

thinking about the meaning of words, logic can be used with comparative safety; but when we turn to the meaning of actions, of events, of persons, of history or of anything that is alive and in process of change, the rigidity of our logic is apt to trip us up and to betray us into disastrous mistakes. In the matter of risks there is little to choose between the mechanists and the vitalists.

As a last example of an eminent vitalist I will mention the name of Carlyle, also one of the teachers of my youth, and, indeed, of my age as well. His thinking betrays immense vitality; I reckon him one of the most valiant thinkers of modern times, perhaps not the deepest, perhaps not the most comprehensive, but certainly one of the bravest. Yet it is not on that reason alone that he deserves to be counted among eminent vitalists, or perhaps I ought to say among eminent vitalizers. I said just now that a vitalist is primarily interested in the joys and sorrows of life; his base of operations as a thinker, so to speak, is in them. Now the interesting thing about Carlyle's vitalism is that he made his base of operations in the sorrows rather than in the joys. He tells us again and again that sorrow had been his great schoolmaster. The "divine depth of sorrow" is a phrase to which he constantly recurs, never failing to warn us that if we would learn the meaning of life we must not be afraid to enter those dark waters and learn our lesson there. This seems a strange doctrine on which to found a vitalist philosophy, and I dare

say that Carlyle, like the others I have referred to, sometimes overdoes it. If he had said a little less about the divine depths of sorrow and a little more about the divine depths of joy, perhaps his thinking would have been more vitalizing than it is. Certainly it would be more agreeable to people optimistically inclined. But here again we have to remember in Carlyle's favour that sorrow at its deepest point, sorrow in the divine depths of it, has something in its nature that is strangely akin to joy. It is only on their upper levels, and in their less poignant forms, that these two, joy and sorrow, stand opposed. In the divine depths of them both, they are more alike than anyone would think who had never been down into those depths; and I suppose that this is what Victor Hugo had in mind when he said that to be perfectly happy is a terrible thing. On that ground I think we may accept Carlyle as a vitalist or, at all events, as a vitalizer.

An illustration of all this may be found, ready to hand, among the notions we form of our neighbour and of our fellow men in general. How little we know of any human being if we think of him only as he presents himself to the eye! How little we could find out about him by mere visual inspection as an object in space! What would his face mean if we were unaware of the invisible mind which animates his features? What would his hands mean if we knew nothing of the powers they exercise, of the living function they fulfil? What would his

whole body mean if we forgot that it changes incessantly, that it has grown to be what it is and is on the way to become something different at the very moment we look at it? What does a child mean if we forget that he is going to be a man? or a man, if we forget that he is growing older, and getting nearer to the stage when he will become the undertaker's property, all the time we are discussing his fortunes? We are reminded of the conscientious philanthropist who spent a whole day in deciding whether he would send food to a starving family and found, when he decided to do so, that the family had all died of hunger while he was making up his mind. These things do not stand still. If we would understand our neighbour and deal with him, not as a mere thing or phantom of a thing, but as a living reality, we must enter with him into the time flow of his existence, foreseeing what he will be and remembering what he has been; if a child, then on his way to become a man; if a man, then one with his childhood behind him, his old age before him and the silence of death at the end of his journey.

And if we are dealing with men in the mass, with societies and civilizations, how much more does our time-faculty need to be awake! How important it is to realize that in the life of society, as in the life of the individual, nothing ever stands still, that every point of arrival is also a point of departure, that every station reached is a station on the road to something else, better or worse as the

case may be; that the oldest civilizations of which history bears record were the newest civilizations when they appeared, and that any new civilization our efforts may create will grow old just as they did and be carried along by the time-river to issues beyond itself. One of the oddest illusions to which many of us are prone is that of picturing our ancestors as old men. We like to think of them as invested with venerable attributes. In the same way we often discuss past ages as though they were known to be past by the people who lived in them, treating the early Christians, for example, as deliberately playing the part of being "early" for the instruction of modern theologians.

Though it may be that only the highest genius can realize these things completely, in some measure they are realized by all of us. Otherwise there would be no such thing as sympathy, no such thing as justice, and social life would be impossible. But we are capable of forgetting it all, and some of our absurdest mistakes in dealing with one another are the consequence of forgetting it. Children educated by methods which stop short when the children leave school and lead on to nothing beyond; evils suppressed by rolling them out flat, while leaving the source of the evil to break out in other channels; Utopias planned with nothing to keep them alive; houses built that will be the slums of the next generation—these are a few of the points where the time-thinking faculty is apt to fail us. We think too much of the visible map of the world

and enter too little into the invisible time forces which operate behind the scene. Our minds are too urban.

If we examine ourselves candidly, most of us will have to confess, I believe, that we are inveterate picture or space thinkers. I would even say that we are picture lovers—not necessarily in the sense that we patronize painters or prefer the National Gallery to the British Museum—but in the more general sense that things are not real for us until we have formed the picture of them; and when we have seen the picture and begin to talk about their "reality" our minds are apt to halt at what the picture has shown on the visible exterior, and to leave the invisible interior unplumbed.

This one-sidedness is of course no new thing in human nature. The beginnings of it existed when the cave men decorated the walls of their caves with the pictures of buffaloes, though I suspect that in their case the motive which led them to make those pictures was not so much the pleasure of *looking* at the buffaloes after they had drawn them as a dim feeling that they were actually *creating* buffaloes in the act of drawing them, and so competing with the gods at their own game—the delight in creation, of which all genuine art is a manifestation. We may often observe it, working mightily, in young children, and only suppressed when the shades of the prison house begin to close. I remember a child of my own showing me the picture of a monster drawn on a sheet of paper with

the remark "See, father, I have *made a cow*." Later on the notion of *making* a cow will pass away and the notion of *copying* a cow, fostered by an evil system of art teaching, and fatal to art, will probably take its place.

In modern times the demand for the picture-copy has assumed a form which has nothing to do with the delight in creation, but much to do with the passion for sight-seeing in general. It has been greatly stimulated, of course, by recent inventions, the reproductions of photography, the easy multiplication of copies, and it will be still further stimulated when television becomes common. I would not deny its educative value when properly mixed with other things, but there are dangers in allowing it to become the dominating force in our culture. It is quite conceivable that the sight-seeing passion, stimulated by the means I have just alluded to, with its attendant habit of picture thinking, might grow to such a point that the time-thinking faculty would be killed out, with disastrous effects to our sense of reality and standard of value. For the reality and value of things, which are ultimately the same, are never to be gauged by considering only the way they *look*. We must consider also the way they *last*. And that is what no picture of them can show us.

A powerful corrective might be found in music —an art which has more to do with time than with space. For my own part I never feel myself so completely immersed in the world of time as when

listening to one of Beethoven's Symphonies. But here again not all the signs of the times are encouraging to the time thinker. Jazz music seems to be popular, and jazz music, if I hear it rightly (and I am not quite sure that I do), is distinguished from other kinds of music by its contempt for time. Instead of getting you into the time world, it jerks you out of it. It seems to consist of a series of interruptions—in which respect it bears a striking resemblance to certain aspects of modern life.

To which of these two types does our own manner of thinking conform? Am I a space thinker or a time thinker; or both in due proportion? Do I think mechanically or vitally? Short of an answer to this question no man can pretend to "know himself." Perhaps the reader will be helped to the identification by the following summary of characteristics.

If our thinking is of the mechanical or space-dominated type our habit will be to picture the world as a visible scene of which an all-seeing camera might take a photograph, and the history of it will be a vast panorama, or moving picture show. Corresponding to this we shall think of ourselves as *spectators* of the scene before us. All our questions will be questions about the picture and of its relation to us, the spectators. "Did the world exist before there was any mind to know its existence" will mean "did the picture exist before there

was any eye to see it?" "Seeing is believing" will be the governing motto of our thought.

If our thinking conforms to the other type we shall understand both the world and its history in a different manner, and all our "problems" will be varied accordingly, answers which brought satisfaction to the space thinker bringing no satisfaction to us. We shall *feel* the world rather than see it; feel it as a mighty pressure or dynamic urge; feel it, perhaps, in the marrow of our bones. As to history, we shall breathe it in with our breath and know that we are carrying it on with every step we take; we shall be aware of it as a continuous pulsation in our lives. The centre of our interest will retreat behind the scene to the inner dynamic of the world, invisible but deeply felt. The visible scene will not cease to interest us; it will be to us what language is to the lover of literature; but our primary interest will be in the *meaning* behind it. Our notion of ourselves will be framed accordingly. Our part will be that of actors in the drama and not spectators only, and we shall feel that a full participation in the universal life is a greater thing than a correct interpretation of it.

VIII

THOUGHT, THINKING AND THE THINKER

WHEN Lucretius of old wound up his attack on religion by the exclamation "What mischief has it not done!"—*tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*—obviously he was thinking not of what religion *is* in the abstract definition of it, but of what it *does*, or is supposed to do, in the concrete application of it. It *does* harm, thought Lucretius. This was the essential meaning of religion to him. He knew religion as a harm-doing, mischief-brewing power. Whatever the abstract definition of religion may be, you will not understand the real nature of it, according to Lucretius, until you see the harm that it does. Religion *is* what it *does*; and what it does is—harm.

Similarly, when we turn to any philosophy, book or sermon in which religion is defended, we find, if we penetrate a little beneath the surface of the argument, that the defence is ultimately based on the belief, uttered or implied, that religion does *good*. The good it does may take any one or more of a multitude of forms. Most often, I suppose, the good it is alleged to do takes the form of good conduct. It does good by inducing people to be moral.

Or the good may consist of temporal happiness, or worldly success, as with Jacob; and again, at higher levels, of eternal beatitude, or of enlightenment, or of the satisfaction of getting all the problems of the universe finally solved, or of joy in beholding the Vision of God. If the assumption that religion does good in one or more of these forms be withdrawn the whole defence collapses. Unless in some way men are the better off with religion than they are without it, who would take the trouble to defend religion? Whatever fine things we might say about it, whatever arguments we might adduce in its favour, all would be in vain if Lucretius or somebody else could answer us by showing that religion, in the long run does, not good, but harm. How obvious that is, and how important!

The same holds true of all the philosophies, systems, doctrines, theories, hypotheses, sciences, dreams and imaginations that have ever appeared in the world. Their ultimate justification, if they have one, is that they do good; their ultimate condemnation, if that be their fate, is that they do harm.

I find this assumption omnipresent in the writings of every philosopher, no matter of what school, nor can I conceive of any philosophy from which it could possibly be absent. I find it present not only in what he is writing about, but in the bare fact that he is writing at all, that he finds it worth his while to communicate his thoughts to his fellow men. When Plato declares that the idea of the

Good is the creative principle of the universe, present in greater or lesser degree in all its manifestations, how can it be this, we ask, unless it is also the creative principle of Plato himself? Is Plato outside the universe? Is this book of rather difficult Greek in which his thoughts are expressed no part of the universal scheme? Does the Idea of the Good cease its creative activities when it comes into contact with Plato's mind and leave him to think and speak independently of it? If his Idea of the Good is present in the dust of the earth out of which man was made, how can it be absent from the words that Plato is speaking to us and from the thoughts that lie behind them? Or take the contrasted case of Nietzsche, with his attack on accepted morality. How can you explain this attack except on the assumption that Nietzsche believes that his readers will be the better for learning what he has to teach? Is not the Idea of the Good operative in this also?

"A thing *is* what it *does*." The pragmatists, who say this, are only repeating what was said of old, "by their fruits ye shall *know* them." If a thing does good, it is good; if not, not. If a thing does harm, it is evil; if not, not. If it does both, we give it a mixed character according to its mixed performance. If it does neither, then it is of no importance to anybody and might as well be nothing. Even the people who try to make us miserable by proving that the world is going to the dogs believe they are doing us good. And perhaps they

are. Our optimism would fall very flat if there were no pessimists to oppose us!

The doctrine that a thing is what it does is usually associated with the philosophy known as pragmatism. That philosophy is certainly not final—what philosophy is?—but it has had the effect of wakening us all up to an extent for which we ought to be grateful. I have much sympathy with the pragmatists, but there is one point where they seem to have been less clear and candid than they might be. If everything is what it does, then this teaching of theirs, this pragmatism, is what it does, like everything else. It would be absurd to contend that all things in the universe are what they do except pragmatism. Pragmatism cannot claim a privileged position for itself outside the range of its formula; it must swallow its own sauce, and be content to *be* what it *does*, along with the sticks, the stones, the stars, the plants and the animals. If what pragmatism does is to make us all wiser than we were before, then pragmatism is a wisdom-producing article, and that would be the final definition of it on pragmatic principles.

The same would hold true of all the other systems to which pragmatism stands opposed or contrasted. They all are what they do, and I suppose they all do something, either by making us wiser or less wise, either by leading us to error or by leading us to truth. These systems are extremely active things. They are not to be thought of as reposing inertly within the two covers of a philo-

sophical treatise. They are *powers*, and the world is full of the effects which they have produced and are producing. What, for example, is the system of Karl Marx? Russia, as it exists today, gives the answer. If anyone wishes to know what Marx' system is let him go to Russia and learn what it is by observing what it *does*. He may approve of what it does, or he may disapprove, but I can think of no better way of finding out what the system really *is*.

I have said that all these systems, these "isms," *do* something,—pragmatism, absolutism, theism, atheism, materialism, spiritualism and the rest,—all do something. But now I must correct my language. Strictly speaking there is not one of them that does anything at all. In and for themselves they do nothing, not even pragmatism. Great things indeed get done which never would be done unless the "isms" were there; but they are not done by the "isms"; *they are done by human beings*. The system is only the pattern of thought, but it doesn't think; or the pattern of action, but it doesn't act. Human beings do the thinking and the acting; human motives supply the driving power; human wills the lines of direction. If these human thinkers and actors were annihilated tomorrow and the books in which the systems are written left standing in the libraries what could they do? Nothing!

It may seem unnecessary to call attention to a thing so obvious. But a great difference will be

made in the whole character of our thinking if we consistently remember that all our systems are simply so many different patterns of human life, so many names for the different ways men propose of going about the business of adjusting themselves to the universe; that all of them are humanly operated and quite ineffectual if the human operator is left out of the picture. One of our greatest dangers is that of becoming the victims of mere words. And mere words is just what these systems are when the human operator is forgotten; in which case all our discussions about them degenerate into word battles. Philosophy would become a much more fruitful study than it is if we made it a rule never to discuss an "ism" except in close connection with the human context. Our philosophic studies acquire a kind of dramatic interest, at least a human interest, when we remember, as I feel convinced we ought, that what we are really dealing with is not thoughts, but thinkers; not minds, but minders; not pragmatism, but pragmatists; not idealism, but idealists; not socialism, but socialists; not individualism, but individualists; and so on whatever be the "ism" under consideration.

The next point is even more important. Of all the thinkers we have to do with in the drama of our thought, by far the most active, and yet the most elusive, is oneself. In nothing else that a man does, neither in the errors he commits nor the virtues he displays, neither in his speech-making nor

his love-making, is the whole self of him more fully engaged than when he is *thinking*.

Yet nothing is more easily overlooked. Even the greatest philosophers are quite capable of overlooking it. Hume, for example, declared that when he looked into his own mind all he could discover there were the thoughts or "perceptions" that happened to be going on at the moment, but nothing distinct from them that he could call *himself*. He was inclined therefore to dismiss the idea of a real self as an illusion—because he couldn't find it on looking within, but only thoughts and "perceptions." But we, who read or hear his statement, have no difficulty at all in discovering the real Hume. *He is the one who makes the statement.* He is there before us, all the time, declaring that he is unable to find himself. Did Hume's statement think itself, or write itself? Did it just blow into the universe like a bit of thistledown born on the wind? No: Hume thought it, Hume wrote it, Hume brought it in and shaped it into words and sent it to the publishers after he had written it, with the intention that you and I should read it, and quote David Hume, and nobody else, as the authority for it. "The man who said he couldn't find himself was David Hume." Which means that *we* have found him in spite of the fact that he couldn't find himself.

The same oversight may often be detected in the writers of autobiography. Writing one's auto-

biography is a highly paradoxical affair, so paradoxical indeed that some people have doubted whether it can be truthfully done by anybody. When a man writes his autobiography he makes an objective picture of himself, projects an image of himself into space, and tells us what he thinks proper about the doings and thinkings of that image at the various stages of its existence. But we, as we read what he tells us, have a dim but true feeling that the real man is not the man about whom the story is told, or the picture painted, but the man who is telling the story or painting the picture, the man behind the scenes, the invisible stage manager of the show that he calls his autobiography. The bare fact that he has chosen to write it tells us something about the real man that he may not be aware of himself, and which he will probably keep out of the story even if he is aware of it, though he may reveal it unintentionally by the tone or manner which characterizes the story as a whole.

In contrast to all this there is the case of Descartes, not by any means the only case of the kind, but perhaps the most interesting. It was an intensely dramatic moment in the history of the human mind when Descartes uttered his famous dictum—I think, therefore I am—*Cogito ergo sum.* Whether it came to him as a sudden illumination, or as the result of prolonged reflection, I do not know. Probably it was both, as great illuminations often are. Judged by the bare form of the words, nothing could be more commonplace. But the

meaning of it is profound, so profound indeed that those who have grasped it may be said to possess a master-key. It means that Descartes had made the discovery which Hume said he couldn't make —the discovery of himself at the back of all his thinking, involved in it, actuating it, vitalizing it, affirming it and expressing it. He had discovered the invisible stage manager of the entire process of his thinking—and that stage manager was no other than himself, the *minder* in the mind. Whatever else my thinking may betoken, whatever beliefs it may arrive at, whatever doubts it may entertain, whatever questions it may ask, whatever answers it may give—amid all these differences there is one thing my thinking never fails to betoken, namely, that *I* am in it, that *I* am there all alive, and just as fully alive in my doubt as in my affirmations, in my questions as in my answers.

With that key in his hand Descartes laid down the bold maxim that a philosopher should begin by doubting everything, but always on this one condition—that he keeps fast hold of his key, of the truth that he himself is alive in his doubts, which owe their vitality, as doubts, to that very fact. *Dubito ergo sum.* It was a great discovery; whether Descartes made the best use of it is another question. In one sense the most obvious thing in the world; in another so little obvious that the great mind of Hume couldn't see it.

If the reader has followed me thus far he will find the next step easy enough.

In weighing the value of any system of thought we have to attend not only to the conclusion arrived at but to the living thinker whose conclusion it is, whose *sum* is revealed in his *cogito*. A simple example may be found in the contrasted philosophies of theism and atheism. If we attend only to the conclusion, every theistic philosophy will be counted a vote given for the existence of God; every atheistic philosophy a vote given against it. But when we turn our attention on the thinkers whose thinking leads them to these opposite conclusions we shall find that our judgment needs revising. We shall find—not always, but now and then—that the doubter is a better witness to God than the believer. A valiant doubt is a diviner thing than a feeble belief. A question which rises out of the great deeps, full of the vitality of the questioner, is a divine thing anyhow, no matter whether the answer be forthcoming or not. I think we attach too much importance to answers and too little to questions. All valiant questioners should be reckoned among the prophets. We miss the whole force of Descartes' discovery if we apply it only to thinking in the form of an answer. It applies equally to thinking in the form of a question. I question, therefore I am. The root of the matter is there.

When the Deity introduced himself to Moses on Mount Horeb he did not call himself God, or the Hebrew equivalent for that name. He called himself "I am." "Go unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am hath sent me unto you." In

like manner the Founder of Christianity: "*I am* the way, the truth, and the life." The essence of the Deity is self-affirmation. The existence of God is not expressed by *our* saying "he is" but by *His* saying "I am." The essence of our own nature is the same. As self-affirming personalities we share the nature of the Godhead. God and man meet on the ground of self-affirmation—the ground of "I am."

IX

MYSELF

IN THE last chapter I laid stress on the distinction between the mind and the minder. When we use the familiar words "I am" it is the minder who speaks, and not merely the mind. This is a distinction of great importance. My real self is not the self talked about, but the talker; not the self thought about, but the thinker.

It has been my lot to read many books about "the mind," especially books of psychology, and to enter into many discussions about it. But I have to confess that never have I come into contact with this thing called "the mind." I am of course familiar with the word and with the conception which the word denotes, but the thing itself I have never found anywhere. Even when I look most deeply into myself "the mind" somehow refuses to isolate itself from the rest of me. Nowhere can I find it standing on its own legs as mind pure and simple. As Kant remarks, there is all the difference in the world between the idea, or conception, of possessing a hundred dollars, and the actual dollars safely housed in your pocket. Well, I have to confess that I have never found this thing called "the mind" in any pocket of mine nor in any pocket of my

neighbour's. I have found it only in books and discussions as a word denoting an abstract idea. Whether I pick my neighbour's pocket (a practice not unknown among philosophers) or examine the contents of my own, "the mind" is, simply, *not there.* I find the word, the conception, but nothing else. I see the guinea's stamp but not the guinea, the King's effigy but not the King. "The mind" means nothing till the question is answered which Sidney Smith asked when his doctor advised him "to take a walk on an empty stomach"—*whose?* Short of the answer I would as soon say my prayers to the Equator as to "the mind." Falstaff reached the same negative result when he examined the word "honour," and his reasoning is irrefutable. There is no such thing as honour: but there is such a thing as an honourable man, an important distinction which Falstaff seems to have overlooked.

But though I have never been able to discover "the mind" I come into contact with *minders* every hour of my waking life and have no doubt at all as to their reality. I see them before me in every audience I address. I am in contact with them in the persons of the readers for whom this book is intended. You, reader, are not "a mind" but a minder, and you are actually engaged in minding me, a minder like yourself, as you read these words. You and I are having dealings with one another as a pair of minders at this very moment, and it makes no difference, so far as that relationship is concerned, whether you agree with me or disagree,

whether you welcome me as a friend or shut the door in my face as an enemy.

As minders you and I are never inactive, never inert, never in the condition of *doing nothing*, except perhaps when we are asleep, though I am not quite sure that we are inactive even then. We are always minding something or another, perhaps minding it wrongly or imperfectly but minding it all the same. It would be a gross mistake to think of minding as a mere passive receptivity like that of a mirror reflecting what stands before it. Minding is the most intensely active process we know of; indeed, our very notion of activity seems to be derived from the consciousness we have of our own activity as minders.

To put the same thing in another way, this process of minding, in which you and I are engaged at the present moment, is no mere affair of what we are pleased to call our intellects. Our wills are involved in it throughout. Consider this transaction now going on between you, the reader of this book, and me, the writer of it—and I would say in passing that the transaction going on at the moment, when we are thinking or writing or arguing, is the one transaction which the student of philosophy or psychology can least afford to overlook. He should school himself to study it, "to catch himself in the act of thinking" as Fichte used to say to his pupils. Let us do so at this very moment and immediately we discover the interesting fact that our wills are actively engaged in what we are doing as a pair of

minders having active dealings one with the other. On my side I have to declare that the writing of this book was will-initiated to begin with and is will-sustained in every word I am writing. If my will were to change its direction my thoughts would wander to some other subject and the pen would drop from my hand. Precisely the same holds of you, the reader. Your reading my book was will-initiated to begin with, and is will-sustained in every word you are reading. If your will were to change its direction my book would drop from your hands and you would do something else. Catch yourself in the act of thinking and you will catch yourself in the act of willing. I invite the reader to make the experiment *now.*

The second point in regard to the minder and his minding is one to which the high-minded reader is not unlikely at first to take objection, even to the point of spoiling his will to read any more of my book. What is the nature of this activity that we call "minding"? What is the minder actually engaged in doing when he "minds"? My answer is, that *minding consists, essentially and fundamentally, in minding one's own business.* I lay this down not as a moral precept (though I have no objection to the reader taking it as such) but as a fact, as a statement of what the minder actually does and cannot help doing when he minds.

In saying this, I may seem to be contradicting the loftiest rules of morality and affronting the whole vocabulary of "self sacrifice," "self for-

getfulness," "living for others," "self-subordination to the common good," etc., etc. But it may be doubted whether even the most ardent advocate of these things would go the length of asserting that the duty of the minder is to mind other people's business and neglect his own—an arrangement obviously unfair to the "other people" since it would leave us all in the intolerable position of having our business minded for us by somebody else. But no intelligent moralist is likely to fall into an absurdity so flagrant. The point that needs to be brought home to the objector is rather this—that whoever objects to my statement is minding his own business when he objects; he is affirming *himself* as an objector, and self-affirmation is only a technical term used by philosophers for what is known in common speech as minding one's own business. And, equally, whatever the moralist may tell us, on the positive side, about our duty to others, he is minding his own business, as a moralist, when he tells us so. If moralists would take the trouble to catch themselves in the act of moralizing they would find themselves doing what no minder can help doing—minding their own business, or affirming themselves. The greatest of all moralists did not escape from this. And indeed most of us are thankful that it is so. The strength of His moral teaching is the strength of His self-affirmation. "*I* am the truth, the way, and the life" are words which He is credited with uttering.

This leads to a further consideration which may

possibly have some effect in softening the very natural objections of the reader. Minding our own business is socially injurious and religiously offensive only when it is incomplete, half-hearted and disorderly. But so far as we may succeed in making it complete, whole-hearted and orderly we shall find that in minding our own business we are minding God's business as well, and minding the business of our fellow men in the only way these "others" have any reason to thank us for. God, we may remember, does not call himself God, or *Deus*, or *Theos*. That is only the name the English give him, or the Latins give him, or the Greeks give him. He is known to himself as "I am," which is also the inner reality of you and me. The more completely "I am" affirms itself in any of us—the other name for minding our own business—the nearer we draw to God and to our fellow men.

Let us linger for a few moments over this matter of self-affirmation.

We affirm ourselves incessantly through the entire course of our conscious lives. Our deeds as well as our words are acts of self-affirmation. By every deed we do, as well as by every word we speak, we leave an impression of ourselves on some bit of the universe. And the self that each of us affirms is never *a* self, or *the* self, or self in general, whatever that may mean, but always *my*self.

We are never really passive. Even in our deepest moments of meditation, when every muscle is relaxed and the senses are asleep, we are pouring

ourselves into the contents of thought, never perhaps so intensely active as then, and it is always our own self and not another's. Even the mystic's vision of God is *his* vision, not yours, not mine.

Some of your deeds are right; others are wrong. But they are right or wrong, not merely as *done*, but as done *by you*: they are right self-affirmations or wrong ones. If a machine did them, they would be neither right nor wrong, though they might be the "same" deeds down to the smallest detail. No machine can commit a crime nor do a good deed. A machine can kill a man, but it cannot murder him. And so with the virtues. It is related of a certain Chinese sage that he invented a pill that made everybody who swallowed it virtuous and happy for the rest of his life. But there was no moral virtue in the pill. Whatever virtue there was in that transaction—and I think there was not much—belonged to the sage who affirmed himself by inventing and compounding the pill. Machines are mighty but not heroic; they often break down but they are never cowards. When a man faces the risk he affirms himself in one form; when he runs away from it, in another; leaving on the world the impress of a brave man in the first case and of a coward in the second. A machine can do neither, because it has no self to affirm.

Our self-affirmations may be feeble or forcible; they pass through all degrees of vitality. One of the feeblest is running away—the self-affirmation of the coward, eloquent but ugly. One of the

strongest, perhaps the strongest of all, is that of a man who deliberately sacrifices his life for something he deems worth dying for. Most of us die *of* something; of disease, accident, old age. But occasionally there appears in our midst a man who resolves to die *for* something, like Winkelried when he gathered the spears of the Austrians into his breast at the battle of Sempach. This dying *for* something, instead of waiting to die *of* something, as most of us do, this deliberate dying for something deemed worthy of it, is the strongest form of self-affirmation I know of. The power and vitality of it are tremendous and the stamp that it leaves on the world is indelible. The Christian religion is an example of it.

X

THE MEANING OF LIFE

WE HAVE now reached an answer, positive but not complete, to that profound question, which underlies all the questions we ask and forces itself to the front when the others have been answered—*what is the meaning of life?* Our conscious life is a continual process of self-affirmation in which our wills are actively engaged throughout. That which is written small by the simple words "I am" is written large in the sum total of my walk and conversation in the world, so that if I could place before you a complete record of all my thoughts, words and deeds from the first to the last moment of my self-consciousness it would tell you *that* I am and *what* I am. A man's biography is the story of his self-affirmation. It is the expansion to the scale of his whole life of what he can say in a moment by pronouncing the two words "I am," the working out in detail of his self-affirmation. And always it is the man's own self that is affirmed and not "the self," and, most assuredly, not the self of anybody else.

Were it not so biography would have no interest, no meaning for anybody. Let the reader think of

any biography he is acquainted with—Bismarck's, for example. In Bismarck's biography we find the well-known story of the falsified telegram which precipitated the Franco-German War of 1870. Where does the interest of that story lie? Does it consist in the bare fact that a telegram was falsified and a war precipitated? Not so. The interest of it and the significance of it lie in the fact that the telegram was falsified and the war precipitated *by Bismarck* and by nobody else. Had the telegram been falsified by the chance mistake of the telegraph operator or by a defect in his apparatus, the meaning of the story and the interest of it would be widely different. And so with Bismarck's life as a whole. Let the experiment be tried of writing a life of Bismarck, or of anybody, on the principle of merely recording *what was done* and *what happened*, but without mentioning the name of the man who did these things and whose self-affirmations these happenings were. That biography will not have many readers.

And if that holds true of biography, how much more clearly true it is of human history at large. Human history is the record of man's self-affirmation and would have little meaning otherwise. The significance of it lies, not in the bare fact that civilizations were founded, cities built, laws made, arts invented and sciences worked out, but in the deeper fact that *men* did all these things, and affirmed themselves in doing them. Human history can no more be written impersonally than biography can

be written without mentioning the name of the hero; and the doubt may here be expressed whether cosmic history, the history of the universe at large, would have any meaning at all unless the Being who named himself "I am" were present between the lines on every page. Except for the actors behind (or within) the actions there would be nothing in history worth any man's while to read about. History, then, would have no *value.*

Nor is that all. We have still to remember that the writing (or telling) of history, like the acting of it, is just the historian's way of affirming himself, while our reading of what he writes, our listening to what he tells, our attention to what he records, is the corresponding self-affirmation of his audience. There could be no recorded history without recorders. And who would make a record which no living soul, god, angel or man, would ever read; who tell a story which there was none to hear; who act a drama which there was none to see? What is history but the past addressing itself through the present to the future—each meaningless when standing alone and significant only when united with the other two? Just as you need two parties to speak the truth—one to speak and another to hear, so you need two parties to make history—one to act and another to react by attending to what the first has done. History might be defined as the answer made by men of the present to what the men of the past have done, with the future standing by to hear what is said. It may be observed, too, that

historians, like philosophers, seldom publish their works anonymously.

Newspapers, which record the world's history from day to day, and are formally anonymous as to part of their contents, might seem to be an exception. But no newspaper has yet made its appearance which could justly claim to be an "impartial and disinterested spectator of the universe." They all have their "policies," never more emphatically so than when they claim to be non-partisan; and their "policies" are nothing else than the self-affirmations of some groups whose members are easily identified, most commonly in the person of the proprietor. Like everything else that goes on in the human world they are will-initiated and will-sustained, and the wills that initiate and sustain them are very far from being impersonal, impartial or disinterested. It might be said that an item of news is just the same whether we read it in the *Labour Leader* or in the *Morning Post*.[1] But if that were so, what reason could a man give for preferring to take his news from the *Morning Post* rather than from the *Labour Leader*, or from the *Labour Leader* rather than from the *Morning Post*? Whether he reads the one or the other he knows very well the kind of people who are addressing him and varies his reception of the news accordingly, so that many a statement of fact which he would suspect of falsehood if he found it in the journal of the opposite party he will accept with-

[1] The most conservative of the London newspapers.

out question if he finds it in his own. Were somebody to inform me that he had seen it stated in a newspaper that the Prime Minister intended to resign next week, my immediate question would be "in *what* newspaper have you seen that piece of news?" and my reception of it as true or false would largely depend on the answer. So I venture to say that an item of news is not the same irrespective of whether it appears in the *Labour Leader* or in the *Morning Post.*

And so we come back to our original proposition. The meaning of your life cannot be divorced from the fact that your life is being lived *by you* and by nobody else. Only as lived *by you*, and not as merely lived, is it either right or wrong, good or evil. Only as lived *by you* does the value of it come up for judgment before either God or man. It is your affirmation on the scale of a lifetime of that "myself" which you can affirm otherwise in two words by saying "I am."

"I am." Those are pregnant words, the most pregnant, I think, that human lips can utter. They are full of force, instinct with will power, alive with concentrated vitality. It would be no exaggeration to say that the strength of the whole universe is focussed in the meaning of them; how otherwise could "I am" be the real name of God? "I am" expresses something far greater, far deeper, than the bare discovery of your own existence. It expresses your intention to go on existing—it declares that you *mean to be.* "I am" and "I mean to be"

are two ways of saying the same thing. The words are more than a bare notification of your existence: they are an *affirmation* of it; an intimation to all and sundry that you are not only in existence at this moment, but mean to be in existence thereafter. "I am" affirms you as a light that means to burn and not as though you were a spark that goes out the instant it is kindled. "I am" is "I mean to be."[1] Should the time ever come when I give up meaning to be, which is unlikely, there will be no more "I am" to talk about and *finis* may be written after my name.

[1] "I will be" is given by the Revisers as an alternative reading to "I am" in Exodus iii:14.

XI

NATURE AND SOUL

A REMARKABLE transformation is now taking place, in the field of the positive sciences, under the influence of the doctrine of Relativity. The technique of the doctrine is extremely difficult, but the general results of it can be grasped with a moderate degree of mental effort. They are set forth, with all the lucidity which the matter admits of, in the recent works of Professor Eddington.

And here perhaps I may say that it passes my comprehension how any philosopher or theologian can go on with his work today without facing up to the astonishing revelations which astronomy and physics are now bringing to light. Even so early as the middle of the sixteenth century Robert Recorde, one of the first English writers on Education, laid it down in a book called the *Castell of Knowledge* that the study of astronomy was essential to the teacher of religion, if only as a means of correcting the excesses of human pride. One cannot help wondering what the effect would have been on the general form of theology if that excellent advice had been followed. Dean Inge has told us that the discoveries of Copernicus, insignificant as they seem when compared with those of the new as-

tronomy, have never yet been thoroughly assimilated by the theology of the Western world. The reason seems to be that in the days when Copernicus and his followers made their discoveries the general public knew very little about them, most of the people being unable to read a book. The theologians therefore were able to ignore the teachings of astronomy and go on sleeping their dogmatic slumbers without finding themselves rudely awakened by the criticism of an educated public. Today the conditions are entirely different. The lay world is becoming widely acquainted with the immensities of the universe revealed by the new astronomy, and even the children in the elementary schools get scraps of it instilled into them. Millions of men and women are thinking about these things and asking questions about them, and the situation will become a very awkward one for the theologians if they allow the general public to acquire this knowledge before they have acquired it themselves. If it was important for theologians to study astronomy in the middle of the sixteenth century, how much more important today!

While the technique of Relativity can hardly be understood without knowledge of the higher mathematics, the general conclusion is, as I have said, intelligible to anybody who will give his mind to the matter. We learn that what we call "the laws of Nature" are not edicts which stand written on the face of the universe waiting for our minds to read them off, but are rather codes which our minds

employ in ordering the facts which are before them. In the same way the mind-pictures we form of external objects, whether of a minute thing like the atom or an immense thing like the universe, are not to be taken as exact copies of these objects, like reflections in a mirror; they are all constructed by means of an inner technique which is mind-operated. This is not to say that the external universe is created by us, but it does say that the pictures we form of it and the scientific interpretations we give of it are revelations of our mind-nature, and revelations of the universe only so far as we form part of it.

By way of illustration think of a musical score printed in black and white on a sheet of paper. The score as read off by the eye on a sheet of paper is obviously a very different thing from the audible music when Kreisler is rendering it on his violin. Nobody in his senses would maintain that the score which we see is identically the same as the music which we hear: the score is a translation into the language of the eye of something that speaks in the language of another sense. In the same way our scientific interpretations of Nature, with all their quantities, magnitudes and measurements, are the translations into space-language of the doings of a universe whose reality, like that of music, not only exists in space but goes on existing in time. Our astronomy and our physics, with their space-pictures and diagrams, their formulae, their measurements and their general technique, bear

much the same kind of relation to the realities they deal with as the musical score printed on a sheet of paper and the theory of music behind it bear to the actual music as we may hear it at a concert. You may say with equal truth that the score represents the music, or misrepresents it. In point of fact what the score does is neither to represent the music nor to misrepresent it. It translates the music into another medium. It translates the continuous flow of the sounds as they go on in time, into fixed characters, which do not flow, but stand immovably there on a sheet of paper. It translates the dynamic into the static.

This is exactly what our mechanical sciences do for the universe at large. They reduce a dynamic universe, ever changing, ever flowing and pulsating, to a fixed system of notation and write the score of it in that notation—an immensely valuable achievement. They show us the structure of the music; they help us to create it when we want to do so; but they are not the music itself—very far indeed from being that. They are not even copies of it.

But while they are not to be treated as copying nature, they reveal a great deal incidentally about the human mind. They show how impossible it is to separate the study of nature from the study of ourselves.

In a sense there is nothing new in this. Students of philosophy have long been familiar with the thesis that the mind which knows nature is a consti-

tutive element in the nature it knows. But the doctrine of Relativity has lifted all that into a clearer light than has ever shone upon it before. What was formerly a metaphysical theory is becoming a mathematical demonstration.

The general effect of it all, unless I am much mistaken, is to abolish the separation between man and nature on which so much of our past thinking has been based. We are in sight of a new intimacy between ourselves and the universe, in the strength of which we shall no longer think of the universe as a dumb and awful object threatening to overwhelm us with its immensities, but rather as the embodied word of the living God, addressed to us. To some of our greatest poets, Keats and Shelley, Wordsworth and Blake, this intimacy has been self-evident; but while for them it rests on the intuition of exalted moments, we are now finding our way to it through the teaching of that very science which once seemed to be leading us in the opposite direction. It is no exaggeration to say that mysticism itself is acquiring a scientific basis—not the mysticism that takes the form of raptures, but the higher mysticism of a calm insight into reality, the effects of which are entirely wholesome.

At all events, we have reached a point where the study of nature can no longer be separated from the study of ourselves. In the past we have tried to keep them apart. But we have never quite suc-

ceeded in doing so. Superficially they have been divided, but if we penetrate behind the scene we shall find that man's interest in himself as a living soul and his interest in nature as an external object have never let go of each other's hands.

XII

THE INNER SENTINEL AND HIS WATCH

THERE seems to be little doubt that the first impulse to philosophical enquiry was imparted to the human mind by reflection on the meaning of Death—naïve curiosity as to what happens to a man when he dies, nothing or something, and if something, what? The question is by no means the selfish affair it is often represented to be. As often as not, perhaps oftener than not, it occurs to us in its most poignant form not in connection with our own impending departure, but in connection with the death of other persons to whom we have been united by ties of loyalty and affection. It certainly does so with ourselves and it can hardly have been otherwise with primitive man. This appears to have been the original growing point of wonder which, once started, gradually pushed further until it penetrated into every field of nature and brought into being the whole train of sciences and philosophies, as we now have them, with their attendant civilizations.

In the actual order of history religious curiosity not only preceded scientific curiosity but prompted it. Since then the sciences have advanced so far and

by stages so rapid that their religious origin has been generally lost sight of. In its earlier stages the science of nature was very closely connected with the science of the soul; in the writings of Aristotle, for example, the two lines of enquiry are only just beginning to separate. At that stage natural science was far from having acquired the quality of pure disinterestedness which the modern exponent of it often claims as its crowning glory. What rendered the investigation of nature so important to the thinkers of that time was the need of understanding the forces the soul had to deal with in its intercourse with the physical world. Were they friendly or hostile? Were they such as to render the fortunes of the soul secure or insecure? From questions such as these, which are the reverse of disinterested, came the impulse which drove the human mind into the path of scientific enquiry, and a mighty impulse it was, sufficiently powerful to carry the search into regions removed by an immeasurable distance from the starting point.

Yet even today, when the features of science seem to have lost all trace of their religious ancestry, its old connection with the interests of the soul is not altogether unacknowledged. When Huxley in his famous Romanes Lecture summed up the teachings of evolution as he had learnt them, he did so in terms which bore directly, though perhaps not agreeably, on the interests of the soul. From nature, he told us in effect, man with his ethical

ideals must look for no mercy, no sympathy, no help. Man's ethical ideals are not in nature's line of business. A significant warning to all of us who think we have souls to save, and if true a most salutary one. With the truth or error of it I am not here concerned; but the fact that Huxley gave this turn to his summing up of modern science, warning the human idealist to expect no help from the natural order, but rather to assert his ideals in opposition to it, shows very clearly that the old connection between soul study and nature study was still alive and operative in his mind.

The same remark is suggested by scientific pronouncements more recent than Huxley's Romanes Lecture. It is quite true that individual men of science are not to be thought of as bothering about the soul while they conduct their experiments or look through their microscopes and telescopes. But whenever a summing up is given, in a popular handbook or learned treatise, the great problems of human destiny are seldom entirely absent from the writer's outlook, either explicitly or implicity, either as problems which science helps us to solve or as problems which science stamps as unsolved or insoluble.

As for those of us who are not men of science, but who wait, nevertheless, with eagerness for the latest pronouncements from that quarter, I think we shall find, if we examine ourselves, that our interest in these things is largely motived by hopes and fears which belong to the soul. When

Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, tells us, in his *Free Man's Worship*, that the universe we are living in cares nothing for our hopes and fears, he is answering the very question which leads many of us to read his book, and is revealing, perhaps unconsciously, his own motive in writing it. The interest we laymen take in the findings of science is no idle curiosity. We need to know, and are anxious to learn, what answer Nature gives to our hopes and fears, and most of us, I think, would prefer to face the bitter truth, if truth it be, that Nature cares nothing for either of them than to remain ignorant whether she cares or not.

I think it fair to say, therefore, that however disinterested our scientific leaders may be in the pursuit of nature's secrets, and perhaps they are less disinterested than they imagine, we of the general public are far from being disinterested in the attention we pay to their latest word and the reception we give to it. We feel, more or less acutely, that the interests of our souls are at stake in all that. We want to know where we stand in this universe. Our spiritual fortunes are wrapped up in the answer, and even though the answer be one which shatters a thousand flattering illusions, we would rather have it in all its bitterness and face it and make the best of it. Looking at the matter from that side are we not entitled to say that our study of nature and our study of the soul are still inextricably bound together in spite of the formal sepa-

ration that has taken place between the two branches of enquiry?

These questions show that our souls cannot be suppressed, cannot be silenced, cannot be restrained from introducing their interested reaction on the fields which science would reserve for disinterested enquiry. And the more we are urged by science not to bother about our souls, but to attend disinterestedly to the truths before us, the more are they stung into activity by the attempt to repress them. The soul *will* insist on affirming itself and the questions I have hinted at are simply its ways of doing so. Our souls affirm themselves by asking questions about their own interests, and asking them the more vehemently just in proportion as the questions about nature get answered. The soul-questions are not silenced by the answers which science gives to nature's riddles. They are multiplied by those answers, and inflamed by them into a more passionate vehemence.

When the last question is answered the last soul will be dead. If we penetrate into what one might call the underworld of our intellectual life, we find it seething with soul questions which have been provoked into existence by the very answers science has given to questions of another sort. We have not succeeded in detaching the disinterested study of nature from the interested study of ourselves. The two are still united; united more closely and in a higher degree of intensity than ever before.

From these considerations we may learn how ex-

acting is the vocation of a philosopher. It requires him to keep a double watch and never to relax in either part of it. On the one hand he must keep watch on the world that he knows outside him, and on the other he must keep watch on himself as knowing that world. It is enough for the man of science that he keep a single watch on the world that he is observing: he can afford to forget himself and perhaps it is better that he should do so. But the philosopher can never afford to do this. He must have, as it were, two pairs of eyes, one looking inward to the soul, the other looking outward to nature; both pairs must be wide awake and each must be so trained as to correlate its reports with the reports of the other, and to submit them, with those of the other, to a common interpretation. His business requires what Matthew Arnold called a method of inwardness, but always combined with a method of outwardness, equally constant and equally watchful. He must be an inward-looking soul-student and an outward-looking nature-student joined in one. It is not enough that he studies nature under the guide of the sciences at one period of his training, and the soul under the guidance of philosophy at another; he must study both at the same time; he must keep double watch at all times; he must acquire the habit of double-watching; and a most difficult habit it is to acquire. Or rather a most difficult habit to recover when once he has lost it. I am inclined to think that children are more apt at double-watching than adults,

though of course without knowing it; especially about the period of adolescence. It is certain that if you want to make a good double-watcher you should catch him young. When the shades of the prison house begin to close we tend to lose this faculty, most of us becoming single-watchers either of the world outside us or more rarely of the world within us. Or we become watchers first of one and then of the other—in which case we are certain to fall into confusion. Your genuine double-watcher, I would repeat, looks both ways at the same time. He has, so to say, two pairs of eyes simultaneously active.

However true it may be in religion that we cannot serve God and Mammon, it is certain that our thinking must be simultaneously at the double service of the "subject" and the "object." If the thinker find the Kingdom of God at all he will find it neither exclusively within him, nor exclusively without him; he will find it in both simultaneously. "The Kingdom of God is within you" must not be understood as denying that the Kingdom is "without you" as well. The philosopher discovers the Kingdom in *both*; and he does so by means of his double watch.

To acquire this habit our philosopher must accustom himself to profound meditation, avoiding the distractions of contentiousness. The great Indian philosophers, who are accomplished masters of philosophical discipline, and were deep in philosophy at a time when our own forefathers were bar-

barians, have always insisted on the importance of meditation—even to the point of separating from their fellow men and burying themselves in the silence of great forests, in order that they might meditate more effectively.

Yet I can hardly recommend them as models of double-watching. The strength of these Indian philosophers lies in the steadiness of their *inward* watch, in which we of the West are weakest; but their watch on the outward world is less steady. If I am to recommend a model at this stage, I would again mention Goethe, who seems to have combined the penetrating vision of an eagle in his watch on the outward world with the deep intuitions of a mystic in his watch on the inward. As double-watchers the poets often show themselves more vigilant than the philosophers. Some admirable examples of it can be found in *The Testament of Beauty* recently given to the world by Britain's late Poet Laureate. The fields of Beauty are eminently favourable to double-watching—which is the reason, perhaps, that the great poets, like Keats and Wordsworth, excel in it.

But the time has now come to pass on from general remarks about the need of philosophical discipline and give ourselves an actual dose of the discipline that we need. And since our Western habits of mind are weakest in the matter of the inward watch, the watch that turns on the minder, our exercise shall aim at strengthening that side, the side of inward meditation—according to the wise rule

which requires us to "strengthen the opposite of that which is too strong." Considered in itself the outward watch can never be too strong; but it can be too strong in relation to the inward watch, which must go along with it in the practice of the thinker. This overweighting to the outside has happened, I think, in the mental habit of the Western mind.

XIII

"I AM, THOU ART, IT IS"

WHEN a child learns the verb "to be" he is being introduced, happily without knowing it, to the profundities of metaphysics. The verb "to be," as it stands printed in the child's grammar book, is a summary of the most refined distinctions with which the philosopher has to deal. Far from representing the bare beginnings of knowledge, or the "immediate data of consciousness," it is rather the sublimated product of age-long experience and reflection.[1]

I do not mean that the verb "to be" was deliberately drawn up and set out by a conclave of professional philosophers and expert metaphysicians. The metaphysics imbedded in it are unconscious; they were worked out and expressed long before the word was invented, or the thing thought of which the word denotes. But the truth remains that in starting our children with the verb "to be" we start them with an enormous capital of concealed metaphysics, a vast store of buried treasure, accumulated by the spiritual experience of long vanished generations.

[1] See the chapter on "The God of Metaphysics" in Matthew Arnold's *God and the Bible.*

When these children grow up and turn to philosophical study, as a few of them will do, their chief difficulties will arise from the ready-made metaphysics embodied in common forms of language, especially in the verb "to be." They will wrestle with a problem like Hegel's conundrum of "being and not-being," or the relation of mind to "matter," only to discover, after fruitless attempts to solve it, that they begged the answer from the beginning by adopting the accepted language in which the question was framed. They will resemble the man who thinks he has lost his spectacles and finds after long searching that he has had them on his nose all the time. Not a few of our philosophical controversies turn out to be of that kind. They are controversies about the whereabouts of lost spectacles which are ultimately found on the noses of the controversialists. The verb "to be," which is charged throughout with concealed metaphysics, is responsible for many of these fruitless endeavours. It is a Pandora's box of metaphysical troubles.

Consider what the child encounters when he is introduced to the verb "to be" and made to learn it off from his grammar book. He has before him an apparatus of moods, tenses, numbers and persons. The moods introduce him to actualities in the indicative, to possibilities in the subjunctive and to commands in the imperative—a threefold and highly abstract distinction over the meaning of

which philosophers have wrestled for ages. The tenses introduce him to the mysteries of Time, which he finds already plotted out for him into another threefold and highly abstract distinction—that between past, present and future, between memory, perception and anticipation, between I was, I am and I shall be, to the elucidating of which Bergson, for one, has devoted a system of philosophy. The "persons" introduce him to the distinction between himself and his neighbour, between "I" and "thou," a distinction of critical importance to his future conduct, which we find discussed in a more or less convincing manner in the Gifford Lectures of Professor Royce on the World and the Individual, in the Gifford Lectures of Professor James Ward on Naturalism and Agnosticism, and in other lectures innumerable. The "numbers" introduce him to the puzzling problem of the "one and the many"—"the one" being affirmed by the singular "I am" and "the many" by the plural "we are," etc. All that is an exercise in pure abstractions, slowly elaborated through the ages by the unconscious metaphysic of millions of minds struggling to interpret their experience and to express their thought; and the danger is that the poor child will carry these abstractions into his future study of philosophy, take them for realities of immediate experience, make them the starting points of his investigations and become a confused philosopher in consequence.

And now, at the risk of seeming to split hairs (which I hope the reader will acquit me of when I have done), I invite attention to the threefold statement:

I am, thou art, it is.

I once corrected an intelligent child for saying "I *is*" instead of "I *am*"; to which I got a child's inevitable answer—"Why?" That is the question which I am now raising. Why is it wrong to say "I *is*, thou *am*, he *art*"? Merely bad grammar? Merely the fact that these modes of expression are not usual? There is something more in it than that.

The effect of joining a noun to a verb is to put driving power into the noun, to make it dynamic, to start it going. But somehow this doesn't come off when you say "I is, thou am, he art." That we may set down as the most general reason for objecting to these modes of expression. When the verbs are given wrongly the pronouns don't "go."

When we say "I am, thou art, it is," we are performing the operation known to philosophers as affirming existence. Now, to affirm existence of anything is just to start it going, to set it up, one might say, as a going concern.

What we do, then, when we use our threefold statement, is to affirm the existence of reality in three different degrees—or if it be preferred, we set reality going in three degrees of driving power. When we say "I am" we affirm reality in the highest degree we know of; when we say "thou art" we affirm the same reality, but with a less vital

apprehension of it; when we say "it is," the vitality greatly declines, but the reality affirmed is of the same sort as when we said "I am." "I am" affirms reality with the force of an explosion; "it is" with a gentle pressure.

The key to the whole proceeding lies in the first statement, "I am." The other two, "thou art" and "it is" derive their meaning from that, and would have no meaning at all apart from it. My neighbour is a "thou art" to me only because he is an "I am" to himself, and when I address him as "thou art" I mean that in his own eyes and to his own consciousness he is an "I am" like myself—a truth so important that the whole of our morality may be said to be grounded on it. When Kant, for example, laid it down that the essence of morality is to treat our neighbour as an end in himself and never as a means to our own ends he was pointing to the fact that every man is an "I am" in his own consciousness, and must be treated as belonging to that highest degree of reality which we call a person, and not to the lower degree of a thing, if we are to do him justice. Even if we treat him as a "thou art" we shall miss the fullness of his reality and hardly deal fairly with him—while to treat him as a mere "it is" is the very devil. To treat him as an "it is" is to make a mere thing of him and to use him as a thing for our ends instead of for his.

All the same "it is" never quite loses touch with "I am"—if it did all meaning would go out of it. When I first look upon the universe around

me my ignorance of it is so great that I can only say "it is." But as my acquaintance with the universe grows, more and more of my own nature seems to enter into it, and "thou art" becomes a more appropriate way of addressing it, until at last, when reflection has ripened, I come to see that if the universe could speak with its own voice, instead of leaving me to speak for it, it too would say "I am."

In an earlier chapter I told the story of a number of people who tested their powers of observation by entering a room and writing down afterwards a list of the objects it contained, and how not one of them mentioned the light in the room that made the objects visible. That story may help to illustrate the last paragraphs. The light in the room, which nobody observes, though he would observe nothing if it were not there, since the room would be pitch dark, plays a part closely resembling the part played by "I am" throughout the whole of our conscious experience. "I am" is the light of our self-consciousness, the light that lighteneth everyone coming into the world, which gives a meaning to all our experience by making it *ours*, but which we tend to overlook for the same reason that caused the experimenters to overlook the light in the room. "I am" is the minder who does the minding, but unobserved because our attention is fixed on the things minded. Without "I am" the meaning of everything the universe contains, and the meaning of the universe itself, would be in the

pitch dark. Whenever we find a meaning in anything, no matter what—a dead rat, a ship, a tempest, a church, a love affair, "a sunset touch," "a chorus ending from Euripides," or anything else—we find that meaning because the light of our self-consciousness shines upon the thing before us and enables us to interpret it. "It is" what it is because I am what I am. My own self-affirmation is interfused with the existence I attribute to everything—to tables and chairs, to plants and animals, to solar systems and to distant stars. Logic and psychology, physics and astronomy, materialism and spiritualism, theism and atheism and every other conceivable "ism"—all in the pitch dark, no meaning in any one of them, until the light of the *minder* shines upon it and shows it up—the light which all tend to overlook. I say the light of the *minder*, not of the mind. The mind is one of the many things we think *about*, but the minder does the thinking.

The Deity uttered the last word of philosophy when He introduced Himself to Moses under the name "I AM." He was proclaiming Himself the universal light, which so many of us fail to observe for the simple reason that it never goes out. To know the Godhead as something of which we can only say "*it* is" or "*it* exists" is to miss the essential truth about the Divine Nature and to possess only a hearsay acquaintance with God. If we are to know God at first-hand, which is what Carlyle demanded in the minister of his parish, we must know

Him as "I am" and be able to address Him as "Thou art."

Once more we are reminded how the truth about the world we live in, as science expounds it, is inseparably bound up with the truth about ourselves as we find it out in hours or moments of deep meditation—hours and moments so often described by poets when, like Byron, "we mingle with the universe and feel what we can ne'er express yet cannot all conceal"; or when, with Wordsworth, the visible world becomes alive with the "still sad music of humanity," and "interfused" with something yet deeper,

> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought
> And rolls through all things.

Once more, too, we see how necessary it is to keep the "double watch," lest the minder should be forgotten in the mind, lest the thinker should be forgotten in the thought, lest the soul should be forgotten in the world. They are easily forgotten, as the light in the room was forgotten by the experimenters. Our one-sided materialisms come from forgetting them.

All this leads on to an insight of yet greater importance. Thanks to our double watch, we begin to see that our intercourse with the world about us, as perception reveals it in ordinary experience and as science interprets it to our intellects, is a kind of *conversation* between ourselves as "I am's" and

another "I am" who is addressing us. May it not be, we begin to ask, that the universe itself is *best studied in the form of a dialogue*? May it not be that what we call the "discoveries" of science are, in fact, truths that have been whispered in the listening ear of man—whispered by "this mighty sum of things for ever speaking"? It takes two to speak the truth—in this case a universe to speak and a man of science to hear. What is science itself, what are mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy and all the rest but the Voice of the Everlasting I AM making itself articulate in the language of the human intellect and addressing itself to the human mind?

And what shall we say of the practical applications to which science is put, of the use we make of it for the guidance of our lives, of our general submissiveness to its teachings? Are they not all summed up in the answer "I hear and obey"? "Two and two make four," says the voice of the universe. "I hear and obey," we answer, and proceed to add up our accounts accordingly. "Every man is an end in himself," says the universe. "I hear and obey," we answer and forthwith make laws against robbery and murder, and set up the League of Nations to put an end to war. Most assuredly this affair of science is best studied in the form of a dialogue. Long ago the truth dawned upon wise men that the universe has a Voice and a language. "In the beginning was the Word" was their way of putting it.

That Word has become articulate in many ways, and science is one of them.

The "difficulties" of religion, as the modern mind experiences them, arise from the extreme simplicity of it. The modern mind is sophisticated and bemused by words, but religion is simple and transparent. It consists in the incessant intercourse of the soul, mediated by every form and moment of its experience with the power of the "I am" who makes for righteousness, or, as I think we ought to say, for excellence. We are baffled by the transparency of it all, like the bird or the butterfly which flies in through an open window and then, in its efforts to escape into the sunshine, beats its wings to pieces against the mystery of the clear glass.

XIV

TRUTH AND ITS OPPOSITE

"IT TAKES two persons to speak the truth:" says Thoreau, "one to speak and another to hear." "Truth," says Renan, "is best studied in the form of a dialogue."

Before considering what these sayings imply it is important to observe that speech is only one of many modes of expression in which a truth or a lie can be conveyed. I am not going to moralize, but would merely remind the reader that there are such things as acted truths and acted lies and that these have effects in human life fully as important as those which follow from the spoken or written word. Truth and falsehood are qualities that belong to the work of our hands as well as the words of our lips, and are often more eloquent to the eye than any word can be to the ear. They are expressed by our whole personalities, by our characters, by our conduct, by our general walk and conversation in the world.

Great truths are often communicated by works of art which make no use of human speech, and atrocious lies in the same manner. Every portrait painted is either a truth or a lie or a mixture of the two. The same may be said of every house or public

building. Lies in stone, monumentalized lies, are not unknown in our great cities; and in every district where the jerry-builder plies his trade lies in bricks and mortar can be seen by hundreds. In the articles exposed for sale in the shop windows truths and lies are mingled together, often in the oddest possible manner. Our very clothes are sometimes mere disguises which belie the real nature of the man (or woman) who wears them. And we all know how a look, a gesture, a nod, a wink or shrug of the shoulders can do the business, both of truth and falsehood, quite as effectively as any spoken word. We know also how the fate of an important truth may be decided by somebody remaining silent at a critical moment. What we refrain from saying is often far more significant than what we say.

I mention these commonplaces because I wish it to be understood that what follows applies to truth and falsehood in every form in which they can be expressed. But for convenience I shall refer only to the spoken form, taking that as typical, and leaving the reader to apply what is said to the others, as he easily may.

"It takes two persons to speak the truth: one to speak another to hear." Let us begin by considering that saying in regard to one of the great questions which have occupied theologians in all ages —the question of a Divine Revelation. Suppose we take it for granted, as I certainly believe myself, that Divine Revelation is a fact, that the Divine Being does reveal Himself in one way or another

to the mind of man. How does our saying "it takes two to speak the truth" apply to that?

Obviously the Divine Revelation would be quite futile and meaningless if it lacked an audience—if there were nobody to hear it, to receive it, to understand it, to respond to it, and to profit by it. Launched into the empty space of the universe, with nobody to receive it, the Divine Revelation might as well not have been given at all.

And it would be almost as futile, so far as you and I are concerned, if it had an audience of beings whose natures were different from our own. If, for example, the Revelation were addressed to archangels, or to beings whose intelligences were differently constructed from ours, you and I would be unable to make anything of it—unless indeed the archangels were good enough to translate it for us into forms that we could understand. Before the Divine Revelation can have any significance for us we must assume that *we* are the audience for whom it is intended, that it is sent to our address, and meant for *us*. We must assume that the Divine Being has *us* in His mind's eye, so to speak, when He proceeds to reveal Himself. Except as intended for ourselves, we should have no interest in attending to His revelation. Now what is implied in that?

Something of great importance. It implies (if the homely language may be pardoned) that the Divine Being is sufficiently interested in you and me to find it worth His while to tell us certain

truths about Himself. Irrespective of what the truth He tells precisely is—it may be this doctrine or that—there is profound significance in the fact that He tells us anything at all. It shows that He is interested in us. It shows moreover that He regards us as capable of responding intelligently to what He reveals, and of understanding that it is indeed a Divine Revelation we are listening to and not a human make-up of doubtful origin. We may construe Revelation as an act of divine condescension, or as an act of divine pity for human needs: revelation has often been so construed and perhaps rightly so. But an act of condescension has no meaning except as an affair between two persons who understand one another; and an act of pity for human needs would be a foolish act unless the needs in question were regarded as worth satisfying by the person who satisfies them. One does not condescend to stocks and stones, and though the spiritual limitations of a faithful dog are rather pathetic we should waste our pity if we tried to remove them.

I venture to think therefore that whatever the subject matter of Revelation may be, Renan's saying, as well as Thoreau's, will always be found to apply to it. Divine Truth, no less than human, is best understood in the form of a dialogue—a dialogue between the divine revealer on one side and ourselves as the recipients of what is revealed on the other. It may be that our contribution to the dialogue consists of saying "I hear and obey" and

nothing more. But even that contribution, brief as it is, is profoundly significant. A being who is capable of saying "I hear and obey" when he receives a divine command is a being possessed of very remarkable endowments—endowments which so impressed Immanuel Kant when he reflected on their meaning, that his entire argument for Freedom and Immortality may be said to have been suggested by them. To such a being—one possessed of the high endowment which enables him to say "I hear and obey"—Revelation addresses itself, and would have no meaning in any other connection.

Let us now advance from the truths which God addresses to man in the form of Revelation to the truths which man addresses to his neighbours in the forms of science or philosophy.

Whatever doctrine we are studying, we can never understand it as an isolated thing, self-supported or hanging in the air. It always appears in a personal context, conditioned by the persons who formulate it and by the persons or the age to which it is addressed. To understand any such doctrine aright, even the doctrine of Relativity, we must place it in the personal context to which it belongs and interpret doctrine and context together.

I say a personal context, and would emphasize the adjective. We know, of course, that each science has a context of another kind as well, that, namely, which consists of the other sciences. It is a commonplace that the sciences form together

a kind of co-operative commonwealth in which each serves the rest and is in turn served by them, so that if you pursue your enquiries far enough in any one you will find yourself asking questions which the others have to answer. All knowledge is one.

That might be called the logical context: it is obvious enough to anybody who will give the matter a moment's thought. Less obvious, though not less real, is the personal context. Look closely and you will find that every doctrine, whether of science or of philosophy, owes a part of its significance to the persons who announce it and to the persons whom they intend to hear and understand it. The truth spoken, the speaker of it and the hearer of it—these three are inseparably connected: they form together what Professor Royce calls "a community of interpretation." Separate any one of the three from the other two and it becomes a mere form of empty words—a speaker who says nothing, a hearer who hears nothing and a truth which nobody speaks and nobody listens to: we can take our choice as to which is the most nonsensical.

This becomes yet plainer when we are dealing not with truths but with lies.

If it takes two persons to speak the truth, still more clearly are two persons required to tell a lie —at least to get it told effectively—one to tell it and another to be assaulted by it—I had almost said a knave to tell it and a fool to believe it, though this would hardly be correct, since wise men

are constantly assaulted by liars and sometimes deceived by them. In the same manner the lie when told is best studied, according to Renan's prescription, as a dialogue—a dialogue between the author of it and the intended victim of it—even though the victim's answer consists in the simple statement that he doesn't believe a word of what he is being told. Most of us would probably agree that a lie which nobody ever utters or hears is a very innocent kind of lie, like non-explosive gunpowder. Hardly less innocent is the lie which somebody tells but nobody hears. Of course we may say that the liar injures his soul whether anybody hears him or not. Quite so. But must we not add that if nobody ever listened to lies nobody would ever tell them? Deprive your liar of his audience and his motive for telling lies immediately vanishes. Make the audience deaf and you make the liar dumb. Men do not lie to the winds, or to the waters. They lie to one another. A lie might be defined as an offensive operation performed by one man upon another man. It resembles robbery and murder, and just as robbery and murder cannot be committed without a victim to be robbed or murdered so lies cannot be told without a victim to be deceived. A lie is no mere offence against logic. It is an offence committed, or at least, attempted, against the human beings to whom it is addressed. Here again we find the three things inseparably connected: the liar, the lie spoken and the audience assaulted by the lie.

When lies are in question the significance of the personal context can hardly escape our observation. But when we turn to the parallel case of truth for some reason or another the personal context is apt to get overlooked, or even denied. There seems to be an idea abroad that Truth is a thing so divine in nature that its majesty would be affronted if we connect it too closely with our human lives. Some of us, under the influence of that idea, have surrounded Truth with a kind of theoretical idolatry which has had the usual result of making both the idol and the idolater rather absurd.

At all events I will venture to suggest that just the same considerations which lead us to regard a lie as an offensive operation of which human beings are the victims will also lead us to regard a truth as a beneficent operation of which human beings are the beneficiaries. Whether the operator be God or man is another question; the point is that our human lives are his objective, and that we are needed to complete the picture of what Truth really is. Truth is an *operation*, a dynamic thing, which does its beneficent work in a personal context. Try to put your finger on any truth that nobody is the better for hearing, that nobody is the better for knowing, that nobody is the better for acting upon, and I think you will find it impossible. Whatever else Truth may be there can be no doubt as to its being *valuable*, not merely in the sense that it is good to look at, but in the deeper sense that it *does* good to those who see it, know

it and act upon it. Truth, in other words, is a value, not residing inertly in the lives that manifest it or the words that speak it, but operating valuably, and so making a difference for the better to every mind which accepts it—in contrast to a lie which makes a difference for the worse.

Nor is the force of this contention in the least diminished if we identify Truth with Beauty as Keats so emphatically does. All we do in that case is to change the name of the operating power. An *idle* beauty is no more conceivable than an idle truth. Indeed Beauty is never more falsely conceived than when we think of it as existing to be looked at. People who merely look at beauty never see it. They see it when it operates upon them, strikes them, moves them, stirs them, quickens them, as Wordsworth was quickened when he saw the daffodils or the rainbow.

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky.

Like Truth, Beauty is dynamic and vital; no wonder that many have thought them to be the same.

Let the type of our doctrine be then what it may, common sense, science, philosophy or theology, we find if we study it closely enough that the meaning of it, whether true or false, is never complete until two questions have been answered: "who says it?" and "whom is it meant for?"—the questions of speaker and audience.

Suppose that you heard it announced for the

first time that "God is good." Who said that? Who is behind it? would be the questions immediately on your lips. Was it said by a wise man or by a fool; by an infallible voice or by a fallible one; by a modern or an ancient; by an honest man who wished to enlighten us or by an impostor who was out to deceive? Had Plato anything to do with it? Or is it only a cynical remark of Mephistopheles? And who was intended to hear it? Was it meant only for the archangels, or was it addressed to men like you and me? What kind of an audience does it aim at: an audience of sentimentalists or an audience of hard thinkers; an audience which knows nothing of science or an audience which has read Huxley and Jeans and Eddington; an audience of children in a Sunday school or an audience of business men and members of Parliament? "God is good": before I can appraise those words I want to know who said them; and I want to know, further, whether they were meant for me, and for the like of me, or only for people out of my range; because, in that case, they are clearly no concern of mine.

We are reminded of the way John Bunyan read his Bible. He read it on the assumption that every word in it was not only written or dictated by God, but was addressed by God directly to him, John Bunyan, tinker, of the town of Bedford in the realm of England. Those were his answers to the two questions—who said it? and who was meant to hear it? God said it and Bunyan was meant to

hear it. And the significance of it for Bunyan lay, not alone in what the Bible actually said to him, but, far more, in the surprising fact that the Great Lord of the universe should have found it worth His while to address Himself personally to a poor devil like John. The meaning of what he read in his Bible was inseparably connected with that.

Our acceptance of scientific truths has no doubt a different quality from Bunyan's acceptance of the Bible, but the personal relationship between a speaker and a hearer is still there: the dialogue form is still intact. We accept those truths as meant *for us*, as sent to our address, so to speak, and sent there, moreover, by bona fide people whose intention is to make us wiser by attending to what they have to say. When I read a scientific book there is a certain understanding between me and the author of it. I read his book on the understanding that the author is a fallible man like myself, and not an archangel or a god or a gramophone: if he were an archangel or a god or a gramophone my relations to his book would be quite different, and everything he says to me would carry a different significance. I like to regard my reading of his book as an affair between two gentlemen; at any rate it is an affair between two persons, him and me, and would be unintelligible on any other assumption.

When I turn from science to philosophy the situation is just the same. Here again I am not listening to impersonal voices that speak to me out

of the sky. I am having dealings with Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Mr. Bertrand Russell. If anyone doubts this let him try the experiment of writing a history of philosophy without mentioning the name of any philosopher: even if he succeeds in writing such a book he may be certain that nobody will ever read it, for the simple reason that it would be unintelligible. Or let us test ourselves with an easier question. When, in the course of a discussion, we support our argument by quoting a great writer, why do we find it necessary to mention his name? Why not content ourselves with telling the audience that such and such a thing has been said? Why go on to answer the question "who said it?" Why quote at all? Why bother about authorship at all? Why put your name on the title page of your book? If Truth has nothing to do with the personality of the speaker, as some philosophers would have us believe, why is it, we may well ask, that these same philosophers have not published their books anonymously? Or if Truth has nothing to do with an audience, why do they write their books in English rather than Dutch, or in Dutch rather than English: why do they write them in characters which everybody can read instead of adopting a cypher like Pepys in his *Diary*? Or if Truth has nothing to do with time and place why do they put the date of publication at the foot of the title page, with the place of publication, London or New York, just above it? All that taken together makes

up the human context, the personal context, the historical context; and I suggest that, if you leave it out of account, no science, no history, no philosophy, no proposition of one kind or another, is intelligible.

A great deal has been written about certain mysterious entities called "universals." Universal propositions are supposed to be unconditionally true; true in any context: true in any circumstances or situation: true irrespective of time and place: true irrespective of whether they are uttered by God, man, devil or gramophone: true irrespective of whether they are addressed to anybody or nobody; true irrespective of whether they are meant for an audience of angels or of men or for no audience at all—universally, independently and unconditionally true. Well, I have to confess that I have never met with one of these august entities, either in the physical sciences, in logic, in philosophy or anywhere else. Even those grim and awful objects which appear in the logic books as the Laws of Thought—A is A, A is not not-A and other unimpeachable information to the same effect—even these wear on their faces the marks of their human origin and their human use. They are logicians' tools, invented by logicians to be used in the important but limited branch of industry known as Formal Logic, and though I may be unacquainted personally with any one of these gentlemen, I know pretty well the kind of people I have to deal with, while, behind them all, I per-

ceive the majestic figure of Aristotle himself. Yes, even the Laws of Thought are not quite anonymous; not quite independent of the personal context in which they are set. Nor is the multiplication table. Again I have to confess that I would suspect the multiplication table if I thought that Mephistopheles had a hand in drawing it up.

Behind the readings of nature which physical science gives us there stands *the reader*—the physicist himself. Behind the readings of the mind which psychology gives us there stands *the minder*—the psychologist himself. Whatever reading the physicist may give of nature his reading always stops short of explaining how he himself arrived upon the scene and learnt to read. And whatever reading the psychologist may give of the mind his reading also stops short of explaining his own presence in the picture. Whatever explanation the physicist and the psychologist may give of other things they never succeed in explaining *themselves*, in making it clear why the universe should entrust its secrets to them or to anybody. So behind the readings they give, clear and valuable as these may be, there always stands the figure of the reader. Behind the mind there is always the *minder*.

Let us suppose that you are studying the doctrine of Relativity. It is a dramatic situation which needs your presence and Einstein's before it can be constituted at all, before there can be anything for you to study and understand. Your contribution to the dialogue may possibly take the form of men-

tally replying to Einstein that his mathematics are beyond you and that you don't understand him. Or you may reply by saying "I understand you; I see what you mean." But it is as certain as anything can be in this world that unless you, or others like you, were there to make an audience and to answer in the one way or the other, the doctrine of Relativity would never have come into existence, and Einstein's book would never have been written. So too the relation in which you and I stand to one another at the present moment—that of a writer addressing his readers—is the relation in which all the thinking of mankind has got itself done. Philosophers do not shoot their arrows into the void; they shoot them at the minds of their fellow men—and their publishers aim at the same target.

This is an important consideration. It reminds us once more how impossible it is to separate any kind of study from the study of ourselves. Whether it be the doctrine of Relativity, or any other, we have to say in the last resort "this doctrine is what it is, *because we are what we are*."

XV

LOGIC AND MYSTICISM

TO CATCH ourselves in the act of thinking," the minder in the mind, the thinker in the thought, the philosopher in the philosophy, the moralist in the moralizing, the publicist in the publication; to recognize that all these activities of the mind are nothing else than different modes of self-affirmation, will-initiated, will-sustained and addressed, by the very form we give them, to self-affirming personalities like our own—such is the effort we have been making.

And an effort most assuredly it is, demanding continuous activity of the will, as insight always does, both for getting it and for keeping it when got. Such insight is dynamic and vital, vanishing on the instant the thinker relaxes the vigilance of his watch. Like the athlete, but on another level, the thinker must keep himself in "high condition" for his work, his logic having no force save what it derives from his spiritual vitality, his visions no permanence save as he valiantly wills to retain them. If resolution is needed for the life of Faith, how much more for the life of Reason! In the keeping of the irresolute none of Reason's con-

quests is "safe." Rationalism and feebleness, high thinking and "low condition," go ill together.

I now propose to carry a little further the effort we have hitherto been making—the effort of keeping a double watch on the thinker as well as the thought, and so tracing whatever "system" we may study back to the personal sources in which it originated, to the self-affirmation it betrays.

To the statement that the mind apart from the minder is nothing, objection might be taken that "the mind" is at all events a useful abstraction, with a function of its own in the field of abstract reasoning; and that, since it *does* something there, it *is* something in reality. This is true; but again we have to remember that abstract reasoning itself is nothing apart from the abstract reasoner. Call it a "word game" if you will, and you will truly describe what it often is. But how could the game be played without the player, who affirms himself in playing it?

Within the mind, then, stands the minder, within the thought the thinker, within the deed the doer, within the word the speaker, within the feeling the feeler. The meaning of my thought is inseparable from the fact that *I*, and no other, think it; of my deed, from the fact that *I* do it; of my word, from the fact that *I* speak it; of my pains and pleasures, from the fact that *I* suffer or enjoy them. My self-affirmation runs through them all. My feelings, words, deeds and thoughts are not floating derelict in space or time, drifting at large in the

universe, impersonal, homeless and unattached. They are anchored in *me*, as yours are in *you*. Pains and pleasures which nobody feels, words which nobody speaks, deeds which nobody does, thoughts which nobody thinks—what is all that but meaningless verbiage, names given to empty nothings?

In like manner when we turn to the great topics of human culture, philosophy, history, art, science, logic, mysticism, we find that these, too, are never homeless, unattached, impersonal. Behind the philosophy stands the philosopher; behind the history, the historian; behind the art, the artist; behind the science, the scientist; behind the logic, the logician; behind the mysticism, the mystic. Self-affirmation runs through them all. The philosopher affirms himself by his philosophy; the historian by his history; the artist by his art; the scientist by his science; the logician by his logic; the mystic by his mysticism. And the self thus affirmed is never an abstract anybody, but always a concrete somebody, vital and dynamic—never *a* self, *a* person, *a* man, but always *this* self, *this* person, *this* man, always *myself*, always *me* (or *you*) who "by the grace of God am what I am" and for no other reason I can assign.

If there are any regions of spiritual activity in which personality is of no account I suppose that logic would be cited as one and the experience of the mystic as another. I select them for consideration on the principle of attacking one's task at its hardest point.

If we examine any argument which proceeds according to the rules of logic we discover behind it a distinct and interesting human situation. The situation is, that somebody is in doubt, or somebody is in danger of making a mistake, while a second person, on the other side, is bringing logic to bear on him, either to remove his doubt or to save him from the mistake he is in danger of making. In a world of persons immune from error and doubt it is clear that the science of logic would never have come into existence. As "good" is said to be unintelligible except in a world where "evil" exists, so logic would be unintelligible except in a world of fallible and doubting men to whom it is addressed, and for whose help and guidance it is designed by the creators and operators of the science.

Take, for example, the common syllogism, all men are mortal, the Prime Minister is a man, therefore the Prime Minister is mortal. What is the assumption behind that? The assumption is, that somebody is capable of doubting the mortality of the Prime Minister, or is in danger of treating him as though he were one of the immortals. What, indeed, would be the point or purpose of presenting an argument to prove the mortality of the Prime Minister if nobody were capable of doubting it or denying it? Who would take the trouble to argue logically against doubt or denial if doubt and denial were impossible? And so with logic in general.

Logic, therefore, may be defined as a form of social service, originating in the good will of certain benefactors, known as logicians, who are interested in saving their fellow men, along with themselves, from the manifold errors, pitfalls, fogs, aberrations, hesitations, confusions into which they show themselves prone to fall or to wander. What pains does the logician take for that purpose, carefully classifying our fallacies, foreseeing every point at which we are likely to come to grief, and giving minute instructions for avoiding the danger and keeping our feet in the narrow path! What mother managing a naughty child, or devoted nurse sitting up all night with a delirious patient, has ever taken greater? The logician is far from being the impartial and disinterested operator he seems to be and sometimes, in his modesty, even claims to be. Nor is it enough to describe him as interested in "the truth"; for if that were all he would keep his logic for his private use. But he offers it to his fellow men, proving thereby that he is interested in *them*, and would save them from error if he could. He may be compared to the man who patrols the sea beach in summer-time to rescue incompetent swimmers who get out of their depth. His science is *meant* for the purpose of rescue and has no meaning apart from that.

Thus, we may say once more, it takes two persons to be logical: one capable of making a mistake and another of setting him right. Accordingly, logic is best studied as a dialogue or dynamic transac-

tion between the two. In the freewill controversy, for example, where each side seeks to rescue the other from an error concerning the will, the logic of either disputant has no meaning apart from the opposition of the other; as a monologue launched into space or addressed to the winds it would be perfectly futile; but acquires meaning, and a profound meaning, too, the moment we consider the controversy as a dialogue between two *persons*, each active in affirming himself by setting the other right.

Precisely the same holds true of mysticism. Whatever the nature of the mystical experience may be, there can be no doubt that mystics, in all ages, have put forth immense efforts to communicate the experience to their fellow men. "Without us" even the mystic would not be "made perfect"; without an audience to hear the report of his experience, the experience would not be complete. Like the man who immured himself on a desert island and confessed afterwards that he was thinking all the time of the fine story he would have to tell about his adventures in solitude, so the mystic, if we may judge by the greatest examples,—and we should think all the better of them for it,—emerges from his self-absorption in the Infinite with a keen desire to share his experience with others; yes, even to make it known that this thing has happened to *him*. After all, it was *himself*, and no other, to whom the vision came or the voice spake—and there is a deep significance in

that, which even the least self-regarding of mystics does not, and cannot, overlook. The mysticism of St. Paul is not identical with the mysticism of Wordsworth, nor the vision of God as seen by Dante with the vision of God as seen by George Fox. We are by no means indifferent to the question "who was the seer?" Just as we ask "who said it?" when we hear it reported that God is merciful or good, so when the vision of God is spoken of do we not ask at once "who *saw* it?" Was it St. Paul or Wordsworth, or Dante or George Fox? We are not content till we have traced the experience to its personal source and know the man we have to do with. Much depends on that knowledge. The question "what is mysticism?" and the question "who were (or are) the mystics?" must be answered together, if at all.

It may be observed that writers on mysticism seldom neglect the latter question, though not always alive to its bearings, but seem rather to take all possible pains to inform us of the names, dates, parentage, personal characteristics and general biography of the seers to whom they introduce us. Why should this be done if the only question to be answered were "what is mysticism?" Is it merely to gratify our idle curiosity? Or is it not because we are thus helped to understand what mysticism really is?

Here I would remark that the statement, often made, that the truth of a religion is independent of its origin can be accepted only within narrow

limits. Every religion embodies a tradition of personal good faith, and none would long survive if the discovery were made that its founders and missionaries were fools, fanatics, madmen, imbeciles, or deceivers. To know everything about them is not necessary, and would be impossible in any case, but we must know enough to be assured of their competence and good faith. To say—as some of us may often have heard—that provided a given doctrine is true, it makes no atom of difference who uttered it, is to beg the question; since nobody would accept it as true if he had reason to believe that the original author of it was a liar or a fool. Even confidence in science is inseparable from the fact that men of science have proved themselves trustworthy, and would collapse immediately if they fell under a general suspicion of bad faith. How much more profoundly does this hold true of religion! Direct knowledge of the founders may be and usually is impossible; some of them, indeed, are lost in the depths of an almost impenetrable obscurity, so that we know them only by the succession they left behind them or by the effects which their lives produced on the world, often building up their personalities from these data into figures of unimpeachable authority far beyond the bonds of likelihood, and yet revealing, by the very extravagance of our proceedings, that the truth without the truth-speaker has no power to convince us. And if the truth he speaks be of the order that

is called mystical, so much the more do we insist on knowing who he is or was.

Mysticism, like logic and all the rest, turns out to be will-initiated and will-sustained. To which a further consideration must be added. Those disciplines of inner meditation, to which the mystic calls us and of which his vision is said to be the fruit, are among the severest exercises of self-mastery to which a human being can submit himself; you need an iron will to carry them through. To enter into one's closet and shut the door is not as easy as it sounds. "To go apart into the mountains and pray" is more difficult still—especially in these days. The dynamic of self-affirmation runs through it all, not less in *holding* the victory after it is won than in fighting the battle which wins it.

Apart from these conditions the cult of mysticism is distinctly unwholesome. The would-be mystic who hopes to attain some "religious experience" in which he will be able to silence all doubts by proclaiming "I have felt," so that a vigorous self-affirmation will no longer be necessary, would be better employed in "cultivating his garden."

XVI

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PUBLICATION

THE Highest," said Goethe, "cannot be spoken."

Reflecting on the meaning of these words—and they are well worth reflection—we observe, in the first place, that the saying owes not a little of its force and weight, and therefore of its meaning, to the fact that it was Goethe, and no other, who uttered it. The saying is far from being "vox et præterea *nihil*." It is "vox et præterea *Goethe*"—a very different thing. Had the words been borne to our hearing by a wandering wind, or with the name of some other author attached to them, the meaning would not be quite the same. Along with their intrinsic force they carry the force of Goethe's personality. They come to us reinforced by all the wisdom we associate with his name; all the other wise sayings that Goethe uttered stand invisibly behind them and back them up. You learn one thing when I tell you these words were spoken; you learn a far more significant thing when I add they were spoken *by Goethe*. We know whom we are dealing with, and that makes all the difference to what the saying means.

A second point to challenge reflection is that Goethe, perceiving that "the Highest cannot be spoken," *bore witness accordingly*, offered his insight to his fellow men, instead of keeping it to himself. A contentious person might argue that, if the saying be true, the part of consistency is to say nothing whatever about the Highest, not even to the extent of warning us to hold our peace concerning it. Was not Goethe himself "speaking" the Highest when he declared it to be unspeakable, the negative being, as the negative so often is, like Spencer's "Unknowable" for example, a positive in disguise? Moreover if Goethe, as his biographers inform us, was one of those who pursue knowledge for its own sake, the knowledge that the Highest is unspeakable ought to have satisfied him. But clearly he was not satisfied until, after attaining this knowledge, he had got it uttered and published for the information of his fellow men. In doing that he does more than express his knowledge; he affirms himself as the knower and implies the existence of other knowers, namely you and me, whom he deems to be capable at least of understanding what he has to say and perhaps as worthy to receive it. The publication is additional, not involved in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and clearly not required by it; a highly significant act of Goethe's will, one might even say of his good will to you and me, only to be accounted for by the presence of human motives and interests which have nothing to do with knowledge as such; but much

to do with the *knower*. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as knowledge. But the knower is real and real on both sides, his and ours. By the act of publication he reveals this reality, affirming himself and us as positive actors in the universe and not spectators of it only. *What* he publishes will no doubt tell us much, but his act in publishing at all tells us more and takes us to the root of the matter.

The psychology of publication deserves more attention than it has received. It is certainly remarkable, and perhaps surprising, that amid the mass of publications devoted to psychology, *the psychology of publication itself* seems to be overlooked—the very act which the psychologist is performing when he produces his book. We have chapter upon chapter about sensation, perception, cognition, emotion, conation, expression, but about publication, which is not the same as expression, we have nothing. In particular, we have lengthy discussions over the nature of the will, and much argument as to whether its actions are free or determined; but rarely do we meet a psychologist who will pause to ask himself whether the act of publication, the very act he is performing at the moment, is a free act or a determined one. "Catch yourself in the act of publishing" is a precept that needs to be pressed home on both parties to this dispute. "Catch yourself doing what you are doing *now*. Are you publishing because you cannot help it, or because you have freely chosen to publish? And the other man, whose opinions you are op-

posing—has he put out those mistaken theories of his under the compulsion of an iron necessity or because he has freely chosen to appear in print rather than keep his theories to himself? Answer these questions *first* and then proceed to the discussion of the rest." This surely is a fair challenge to *both* sides.

The omission is the more remarkable in view of the fact that the publication-motive has become one of the most active psychological forces in modern life. Thanks to the printing press and to the general means of publicity it enters into our life and modifies our thought to a degree unknown in former ages. The difficulty of procuring an audience for what one has to say, which must have been serious to the ancient thinkers, is no longer the formidable difficulty it was. Get in front of a microphone and the way is open to the ear of millions. The typical thinker of modern times thinks *for publication*, in a book, in a course of lectures, in a newspaper article, in a sermon, in a public address. He tends to become a propagandist, with results on the quality of his thought of which he is not always aware, exposing himself especially to the danger (so often pointed out by Carlyle) that in his anxiety to get his opinions accepted by other people he may forget to ask whether he really believes them himself. Like the goods displayed in the shop windows, his thinking—again without his being aware of it—tends to become adapted to the needs of the consumer, a quality not always in

favour of its truth. In extreme cases, though this could hardly happen without his knowing it, his thinking may even become commercialized—a danger to which ancient thinkers, among the Greeks for example, were little exposed.

Whether the publication-motive enhances the value of modern thought depends, of course, on the persons concerned. In some cases it clearly does not. But there can be no doubt as to its presence—I had almost said its omnipresence—and its growing force as a modifying factor in current thinking. It grows with every addition to the means of publicity.

Few mistakes are more fatal (or more ridiculous) than that of supposing that "nothing is history unless it stands recorded in a book"—a mistake not unknown in places where history is "taught" and made into a subject of examination. Of all mistakes it is the one we need most to avoid when considering the history of *thought*. Of the unspoken meditations of mankind we know nothing directly. We know only what thinkers have chosen to make public, perhaps in a manuscript intended for a select circle of initiates, like St. John's Gospel; or perhaps in a popular work of modern times which has run into many editions and won the eminence of a "best seller."

And yet the opinion may be hazarded that our whole civilization, as it exists today, corresponds more closely to the unpublished thinking of the multitude than to the published thinking of phi-

losophers, moralists, prophets or propagandists in general. This latter is far more frequently an attack on the popular ways of thought, or a protest against it or an attempt to change it, than a reproduction either of its contents or of its tendencies. If some future historian, reading the work of eminent publicists now alive, such as Dean Inge or Mr. Bernard Shaw, were to draw the inference that either of these writers represents the mind of his age and country, in the sense that they express what most Englishmen are thinking, it is obvious that he would be gravely in error. He would be nearer the mark if he inferred the opposite.

Obvious as the error is, we often fall into it when interpreting the published thought of past ages. Much that is written about the ancient Greeks comes under that suspicion. The poet Dante, again, has been described as embodying the mind of the Middle Ages. But anyone who will take the trouble to study his writings will soon discover that Dante himself had no notion that he was playing any such part. To begin with, the age to which he addressed his publications was not "middle" at all as he saw it, but rather the last thing out in "ages," and very near the end of the world; while the part he had to play in it was rather that of a corrector than an exponent, correcting his age even to the point of vehement invective against its dominant tendencies. In dealing with representative writers we certainly need to be careful in specifying precisely what their publications represent, not concluding too hastily

that they represent everything or anything that happened to be going strong in the age when they lived. To find out what was really going strong there and then we must extend our study far beyond the published book, attending to what was being done by common men as well as to what was being said by exceptional men, the two being not infrequently in flat opposition. The multitude has ways of its own for publishing its thoughts, which differ considerably from those of its representative writers. New York, London, Paris and the rest, with their palaces, slums, pleasure houses and factories, are the thinking of the multitude made public in the visible forms and forces of our civilization. They are community publications, which challenge us to read them. It seems a pity that the art of reading should be confined to the printed page.

Returning to publication in the narrower sense, let us consider briefly how the contents and quality of thinking, in any age, are affected by the conditions under which it is published. This we can best do by a comparison between our own times, with their immense apparatus of publicity, and times when audiences were small and not easily accessible.

The modern thinker addresses himself to an audience the size and composition of which he cannot foretell, not even with his publisher to aid him. If he is already famous, he may count on his audience being large; if not, all will be in the dark. His book may be read by a few wise men who will

catch his meaning, or by thousands of blockheads who will misconstrue it, or by a mixture of both, or, if the author be unknown, by nobody. If he "knows his public," as some are credited with doing, he will know that his public, having so many other books to read, will not read his unless he makes it attractive, and even so will read it *hurriedly*, being anxious to get on to the next. This knowledge (or want of knowledge) inevitably reacts on his whole mentality by leading him to present his thinking in forms which greatly modify its character. The modification may be all to the good and is so, for example, when the risk of being misunderstood by a miscellaneous public leads him to practise clearness of expression. On the other hand, the dangers are great, the chief being that, under the stress of prevailing competition and hurry, he may become a kind of jerry-builder in the realm of thought, putting up houses that serve for the purpose of a brief argument and then crumble to decay. Between the jerry-built suburb of a great city and the "best seller" in the bookshops there is a striking resemblance, which the most casual observer can hardly overlook. Neither are built *to last*. Both are intended for nomads—each according to its kind.

No doubt the ancient writer was not altogether exempt, in his day and generation, from the same risks. But he ran them on a vastly lesser scale, and certainly had no foresight of a coming time when his writings would be broadcast in printers' type

all over the world, and read in cheap editions by Toms, Dicks and Harrys in their millions. Had the writer of St. John's Gospel or of *The Republic* foreseen the audience they have in the modern world it is certain they would have expressed themselves differently; we may even doubt whether those mighty works would have come into existence at all. However that may be, it is certain, indeed it is a commonplace, though frequently forgotten, that whether we are studying modern thought or ancient thought, or the difference between the two, we need to keep a double watch on the thinker who published his thought and on the "public" he addressed. Out of that context the *meaning* of his thought will not be rightly apprehended.

What, then, are the motives which lead the thinker to *publish* his thought, whether on the small scale of ancient times or the large scale of modern? It is a question that comes home to me, for am I not, here and now, making my own thought public? I propose to answer it by self-examination, according to the principle previously stated, that the present moment, the present thought, the present act is the testing point to which our theories must finally be submitted.

The publication-motive may have, and usually has, a character both manifold and mixed. To begin on the lower levels, the author may hope to win fame by the publication of his book, or to make money by the sale of it. But even on that level his

eye is steadfastly fixed on his audience, on his public. He *means* to produce certain definite changes in *them*. If it be money he is after, he would change them into his tributaries; if fame, into his admirers; "without them he would not be made perfect" in either particular. He may not succeed; the odds are that he will not; but he *means* to succeed, and the meaning of his thought will be found to have corresponding qualities. It will be the kind of thought which he thinks will *pay*, in money or fame as the case may be. Had he been indifferent to these things his thoughts would not have been precisely what they are.

But that is never the end of the story and in many cases, happily, is not even a part of it. When a man publishes his thought, whether in a book or in any other way, he must be understood as saying to his fellow men "here is something I desire you to know, to think, to believe, to enjoy, to suffer or to act upon. I judge, moreover, that you, my audience, will be, in some way, the *better* for knowing what I have to tell you, for suffering or enjoying what I have to disclose." In words he may not say this; usually does not; the reason being that he declares it all so plainly by the act of publication that words are unnecessary. By publication he attempts an interference with the mind of his audience, his intention being to make them wiser or happier and, in that sense, to do them *good*. What author would deny this?

Or to do them harm. When the Devil, who is

an embodiment of inverted morality and a perfectly moral being in his own eyes, takes to publication, harm, no doubt, will be his object; harm from our point of view, but not from his. His interference with our minds will be an attempt to poison them, thereby converting us into fools or knaves; a fool being better than a wise man to an inverted morality and a knave than an honest one. Like our own, the Devil's publications are not to be understood except by keeping a double watch on his point of view as well as on that of his victims. When we do so we see that the principle which governs our doings in this matter governs him no less.

Leaving the Devil aside (though it may be well to bear him in mind as a useful figure at the end of an argument), what, shall we now say, is the meaning of publication as practised by the serious instructors and the well-intentioned entertainers of their fellow men, by poets, philosophers, theologians, preachers, men of science, political orators and authors of light literature? What do they all *mean*? What does any one of them *mean*? And what do *we* mean when we read their books, attend their lectures, listen to their music, witness their plays, paying for our tickets, if need be, in hard cash? Here also it is important to keep double watch—on them and on ourselves.

It has been said (and there are texts of Scripture to support the opinion) that a man's self-respect is his own secret, which no other man has the right

to point at, mention or make public, since by so doing he destroys the secrecy of it, and so destroys it altogether. This may account for the well-known fact that the best men dislike the sound of their own praises and wince on finding themselves publicly advertised as "good." So sensitive are these men to this kind of offence, so fearful lest some blundering admirer should spoil everything by calling them "good," that they will sometimes preface their publications by explicit disavowals of a moral aim—not because they are ashamed of being moral but because, for the reason mentioned above, the secrecy of their self-respect, on which the very existence of self-respect depends, would be invaded and imperilled if a moral aim were made too evident. Even books on morality itself are not unknown, the authors of which take pains to assure the reader that they are solely concerned (as the Devil himself might be, and probably is) with the *theory* of morals, the *practice* of morals being none of their immediate business—"impartial and disinterested spectators" of human conduct whose work is done when morality is sufficiently analysed, studied and explained. Others, like Nietzsche, will go further and attack accepted morality: an extreme measure for protecting the secrecy of one's self-respect from the blundering admiration of the public.

Yet, in spite of the reluctance which such men may feel to having it said, said it must be (if the truth is to be told) that whosoever publishes his

thought declares thereby that he is intent on doing his neighbours good to the extent of making them the wiser by what he has to tell them. He is a philanthropist in that sense. He may disavow this in set terms, but his act in publishing the disavowal speaks more eloquently than the disavowal he publishes. He may even declare himself a hater of his fellow men. But if that were all he would hold his peace. Why does this hater of men take the trouble to inform them of his hatred? Or, like Mr. Bertrand Russell, he may confess to moments of depression when he would welcome the advent of a kindly comet to wipe this planet out of existence. Why does Mr. Russell tell us that? Because he thinks we shall be the better for knowing that he has such moments—as unquestionably we are. Let the moralist and the anti-moralist, the optimist and the pessimist, the lover of man and the hater *catch himself in the act of publishing* and ask himself what he *means*.

Is it philosophy that is being offered to us? Somebody would make us wiser. Is it science? Somebody would make us more exact. Is it art? Somebody would make us happier. Is it amusement? Somebody would have us laugh. Is it pessimism? Somebody thinks we shall be the better off for knowing the worst. Is it atheism? Somebody thinks we shall be the better off for not believing in God. All these, according to their lights, are trying to do us good, and we, who attend to what

they publish, are the "other side" of the game. Without us the game could not be played.

Much has been said and written about the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. But whoever publishes his knowledge obviously does so under the influence of another motive. He is sufficiently interested in his fellow men to wish them wiser and take pains to make them so: or, if money and fame be his object, sufficiently interested in himself to wish himself rich and famous and to have his fellow men for tributaries or admirers. Were all the rest of his morality to be discarded so much of it (which perhaps is the root of the matter) would still remain. How, under these circumstances, can he justly claim to be an impartial and disinterested student of the universe, of human life, of morality or of anything else?

I apologize to any moralist, or anti-moralist (not excepting the Devil), who may read this chapter for thus invading the secrecy of his self-respect.

XVII

FREEDOM AND ITS ENEMIES[1]

HOW strange it is, when we reflect upon it, that the question of freedom, which daily experience gives us a hundred opportunities of answering experimentally, is theoretically baffling beyond all others, so that many of us, driven to despair, are fain to carry it for decision to the High Court of Philosophic Appeal, only to find, when we get there, that the pleadings of counsel are well-nigh interminable and the findings of the judges at variance. This surely is a situation at which even the gravest of the gods must be tempted to smile.

Were a satirist or writer of "travellers' tales" after the style of *Candide* or the *Isle of Penguins* to introduce us to a tribe of intelligent beings who were in doubt whether they had two legs or one, and whose philosophers, divided into rival schools as "two-leggers" and "one-leggers," were engaged in a perpetual controversy on the subject, we should probably dismiss the fiction as too absurd even for satire.

[1] In this chapter, and in the next, my debt is great to Captain H. V. Knox whose book, *The Will to be Free* (Constable), I have found a most valuable aid to reflection.

Yet the controversy about human freedom, in which great minds are still engaged, is not without resemblance to this situation. Does the human will go upon the two legs of an alternative or on the one leg of necessity? Are we morally and spiritually two-legged or one-legged? The analogy, if not perfect, may serve to remind us of the strangeness of the question. This is a case where the question asked is more significant than the answer given. Many philosophical questions are of that kind, but this, perhaps, is the outstanding instance.

I will ask the reader to dismiss from his mind, for the time being, any decision he may have already formed on the matter, any preference he may have for one school of thought rather than its rival, and to consider the deeper question of what is involved in the fact of their rivalry.

This may be difficult but ought not to be impossible. The situation would be much the same if we were discussing the merits of the party system in politics. Doubtless we are all members of one or other of the existing political parties, but that does not prevent us from impartially reviewing the merits of the party system as a whole and asking how it came into being and what it betokens. With a little effort we can place ourselves at a similar point of view in studying the question of freedom. Here too a kind of party system confronts us—the determinists on one side, the free-willers on the other. What does their rivalry betoken? What is implied in the general fact that a

sharp division of opinion as to the nature of the human will still exists in a race of intelligent beings who have been exercising their wills for thousands of years?

Looked at in this way the controversy will immediately suggest to us that we are here in the presence of a real alternative between two opposite ways of thinking or believing, the alternative, namely, between thinking or believing that we are free and thinking or believing that we are not free. The controversy itself is the manifestation or exhibition of that real alternative. Except on the assumption that either way of thinking is possible there would be nothing to argue about and the existence of any controversy on the subject would be quite unintelligible. There is a real alternative between the two ways of thinking and the controversy is the exhibition of it.

Here we have to remind ourselves that thinking and believing are modes of human activity, in which the whole self of a man is as fully engaged as when he is doing anything else. When you think *you* are as active as when you walk, or eat, or make money, or play the Good Samaritan, or cheat your neighbour. Believing, again, is a *clinging* to something, and a man is no less active when he clings to a belief which somebody else is attacking than when he clings to his watch which a thief is trying to snatch from his pocket. If, therefore, there are real alternatives in the field of thinking and be-

lieving, about freedom or any other matter, there are real alternatives for human activity.

This might seem, at first sight, to decide the matter offhand in favour of the freewiller, since the existence of real alternatives is precisely what he is contending for and what the determinist denies.

But the matter is not so easily decided. For the freewiller will presently find that this initial victory of his gives him more than he bargained for and much more than his own theory can assimilate. If the alternative between freedom and necessity is real for *him* it is equally real for his opponent and cannot be destroyed by any argument which he, the freewiller, may bring against it. The consequence is that his victory over the determinist would achieve nothing, since the latter would still be confronted with the real alternative between necessity and freedom and would only be illustrating the freewiller's theory if he changed his opinion a moment afterwards and reaffirmed his former belief in determinism. It would seem therefore that the freewiller in drawing his sword against the determinist dooms himself to perish by his own weapon. This, it must be confessed, is a very odd situation.

If, now, we observe the controversy from the determinist's side of it the oddity is equally pronounced.

If the determinist believes his own doctrine, that whatever is *must* be, he will admit that the doctrine itself and his own belief in it fall under the rule.

He believes in determinism because he has to, and *cannot* believe otherwise. The necessity which governs all the facts in the universe governs *that* fact, the fact that he is a determinist, along with all the rest. But if he is consistent he will have to admit further that the same reasoning applies to the belief of his opponent, the freewiller. From the determinist's point of view the freewiller can no more help believing in freewill than he himself can help believing in determinism. The necessity which governs all things is responsible for *both* beliefs, yours in determinism, mine in freewill. Both of us are in the same net—the net of universal necessity. The fact that we are arguing about it at this moment, the fact that I want to convert you to my opinion, that you on the other side want to convert me to yours, every argument you advance against me as I against you—all *must* be what it is; necessity governs every detail of it.

Interpreting the controversy in this way—and I do not see how a consistent determinist can interpret it otherwise—it would appear that the determinist, no less than the freewiller, dooms himself to destruction in the act of drawing his sword. The determinist is trying to make the freewiller give up a belief which, on the determinist's own theory, the freewiller *must* hold, cannot help holding, universal necessity having so decreed. It is as though a black man and a white man, whose respective coloration is due to causes over which neither of them has control, should each endeavour

to persuade the other that he has made a mistake in being coloured as he is and to wash his colour off in favour of his opponent's.

In seeking for light upon this difficult matter it must be constantly borne in mind that what we have to do with in this controversy is not an exhibition of logical swordmanship by two independent champions, each with a stage all to himself, and performing his feat without reference to the other, the determinist today, the freewiller tomorrow. What we are witnessing is a kind of spiritual duel, in which every blow struck is aimed at the antagonist, or is the warding off of one of his, so that, if either combatant were suddenly to vanish from the arena the other would find his occupation gone, and be left slashing the air and looking a fool.

Moreover, those of us who would study the combat impartially must admit, I think, that unless we felt a measure of uncertainty hanging over the issue our interest in the controversy would evaporate. Backers of either combatant though we be, we can hardly suppress a sigh of relief when our favourite emerges victorious, or restrain the cry "this need not have been" when, to our disgust, he advances a weak argument and lets the other get the better of him. But in admitting that our interest in the issue is dependent, in however small a measure, on the uncertainty of it, have we not conceded something to the side which contends for open alterna-

tives in the universe and so taken side with freedom without knowing it?

It is one of the curiosities of this controversy that each side is in danger, at every step of the argument, of conceding the contention of the other by the very method he adopts for putting his opponent out of court; the freewiller by appealing to logical necessities which admit of no alternative, the determinist by treating the freewiller's opinions as a real alternative to his own.

If we think of the universe as a spectacle spread out in space we shall inevitably interpret everything that belongs to the spectacle, our own activities included, in terms of necessity, and necessity will be the last word. The picture or diagram before us will determine the conclusion and, just as the diagram of an isosceles triangle, when once it is drawn or imagined, leaves no alternative to the conclusion that the base angles are equal, so the picture of a completed human action determines that it must be what it is, that it could not be anything else. Space thinking and the doctrine of necessity are inseparable companions. As spectators of the universe, and of our own actions as elements in the picture, which of course they cannot be until we think of them as completed events, we have no alternative but to interpret the scene before us in terms of necessity.

But when we abandon the attitude of spectators and become aware of ourselves as living actors in

the drama, turning our eyes from the visible record or mind-picture of what we have *done*, and entering into the invisible time-stream of what we are for ever *doing*, the self-evidence of necessity immediately vanishes. The controversy between freedom and necessity thus resolves itself into the contrast between the flow of our self-consciousness, vital and dynamic, and the fixed and unalterable pictures which experience leaves behind it for the intellect to review. It is the conflict between the actor's consciousness of himself as still *acting* and the spectator's view of his *action* when it has become a completed and picturable event. And since the same person plays both parts—actor in what he is *doing* at the moment, spectator of what he *did* the moment before, time thinker in the one part, space thinker in the other—he falls into a perplexity between the two interpretations of his action and appeals to the philosopher to solve the riddle. But the philosopher, in his philosophizing, is in the same perplexity.

Thus the controversy, as carried on by philosophers, presents a paradox. Each side makes appeal to an inexorable logic and exhibits his conclusion as *determined* by that logic and himself as having no option save to accept the conclusion to which his logic has compelled him. From this it would appear that determinism is involved in the very nature of the argument, the freewiller adopting it, no less than his opponent, by submitting to the necessity of logic. On the other hand, it is equally clear

that the determinist on his side is treating the belief in freedom as a real alternative to the belief in necessity, just as the freewiller treats the belief of his opponent as a real alternative to his own. Otherwise what is the point of either side arguing against the other? Regarded from this angle it would appear that unless the existence of a real alternative between the two beliefs is conceded by both parties, there is nothing to argue about. And to concede a real alternative is, as I have already said, to concede freedom.

This paradox is repeated in the temper of the antagonists, as displayed in the literature on either side.

Free will, it must be admitted, is a formidable possession, entailing great responsibilities for the claimant of it. Accordingly we may observe, in those who take that side, a temper of gravity, as of men who stand under weighty obligations, face serious risks, and are by no means at liberty to do as they like. Over against the freedom of choice they claim for the human will there stands, at least in typical expositions, the categorical imperative of the moral law, which imposes restraints upon instinct and desire and commands submission. We are free to choose, but answerable for our choice to an authority which resents disobedience. Under these conditions the temper of the freewill advocate has none of the light-heartedness which the doctrine of freedom, if it stood by itself, might seem to justify but is rather characterized by a sense of constraint

becoming to one who feels that he is here to obey. Such an one was Kant.

Turning to the other side, we may observe that the belief in necessity, as opposed to freedom, is often accompanied by a subtle sense of that very freedom which is theoretically denied, as though a burden had been removed from the soul, and even by the assertion of freedom in unexpected connections.

Cases are numerous of distinguished philosophers resolute in their denial of the freedom of the will, but equally resolute in advocating freedom of thought. The two things have often been united in the same individual—the philosopher who begins by proclaiming himself a free *thinker* and then presents an argument to prove that no man is a free *agent*. I count it one of the most interesting phenomena in the history of thought that so many philosophers whose theory of willing commits them to unyielding determinism have been at the same time champions of freedom in thinking. John Stuart Mill is a notable instance. Consult him on the nature of willing and he will tell you that freedom has no existence there; consult him on the nature of thinking and he will tell you that freedom is the very life and essence of it, his great Essay on *Liberty* being the classical defence of that very thesis. A more recent example may be found in Mr. Bertrand Russell. Mr. Russell has written an essay to which he has given the title, *The Free Man's Worship*. How a man can be free in his

worship, but not free in the general business of his life, free as a thinker about the things that matter most, but not free as an actor in the affairs of the world, Mr. Russell, so far as I know, has never explained. Nor can I explain it. I can only say that if we are free men in either department we can hardly be slaves in the other.

Such is the paradox—a paradox, be it observed, that is equally apparent on both sides of the controversy.

Now, whenever such paradoxes occur, the suggestion always is that we are dealing with half-truths, each of which, though seemingly opposed to the other, is somehow necessary to the other's existence. In such a case only one course is open to us. We must endeavour to find the root out of which the controversy springs. We must deepen our self-knowledge until that root is laid bare. Perhaps, when we have found it, the contradiction will disappear. To find it shall be our next endeavour.

XVIII

FREEDOM AND ITS FRIENDS

IN ALL the discussions here ventured upon I have urged the importance of never relaxing our watch on the man behind the argument, the person whose self-affirmation the argument is. But though the importance of this is always great, and usually leads to interesting results, there is one question in particular, perhaps the most puzzling of any, where everything seems to depend on our observing it. I mean, of course, the question of the preceding chapter.

So long as we attend only to the arguments on either side, and make no effort to get behind the arguments to the persons who are conducting them, to the living wills that give the argument vitality, the best result we can hope for is a perpetual see-saw. On these terms—as a mere logic battle studied without reference to the motives which inspire the battle and sustain it—the problem is insoluble. Indeed, if we divorce this dispute from the disputants who conduct it, and consider it solely in the light of what are called its "abstract merits," the question has no meaning at all. It becomes a waste of breath to ask it and a still absurder waste to answer it, if asked. The controversy becomes significant if, and

only if, we consider it as a conflict or tension in human nature itself dramatically exhibited as a contest between the determinist and the freewiller, each affirming himself against the other. When that is seen, the centre of interest immediately shifts from the controversy to the controversialists and light begins to dawn upon the darkness, a frequent result of humanizing our thought.

During the Great War there were, in most of the belligerent countries, a few persons who made the effort to detach themselves from national prejudice and to study the conflict, impartially and as a whole, from a point of view "above the battle." Viewing the conflict in that way they came to the conclusion that the war was not only horrible but unnecessary, with the result that they were often denounced as unpatriotic by their fellow countrymen. What impressed these observers most, as they studied the war from their point of view "above the battle," was the general fact that civilized nations should be settling their disputes by a method so cruel and destructive. Whatever the object might be for which either side was fighting, the war itself, as a method of deciding the issue, struck them as absurd and astounding. Their utterances on the subject were naturally in sharp contrast to the writings, speeches and propaganda which came from hot partizans on either side, to whom indeed these attempts to be impartial were hardly less odious than the proceedings of the enemy. Yet,

now that the war is over, many of us who were hot partizans while it was in progress are repeating the very words which we condemned as unpatriotic at the time. We too can now study the conflict from a point of view "above the battle."

Most of the literature which deals with the question of human freedom resembles the newspaper articles of the war period. It is the work of partizans, either on the side of determinism or on the side of free will. The same is true, to some extent, of most philosophical controversies, but in none of the others is the spirit of partizanship so active as here. This, I think, is somewhat unfortunate. Like nations at war each of the disputants is so intent on destroying the other and saving itself from destruction that no heed is given by either, or can be given, to the deeper meaning of the conflict that engages them. Yet that is a matter which needs to be investigated. I suggest therefore that we dismiss the belligerent spirit and do our best to keep a point of view "above the battle."

If we succeed it can hardly fail to strike us as very strange (as I have remarked above) that any division of opinion should exist among thinking men on a matter so fundamental. If it be true, as one side asserts, that man is by nature a free agent surely the fact would be obvious to everybody. *Per contra*, if man is not a free agent but a creature dominated by necessity, as the other side asserts, this too, one would think, would be self-evident and need no argument to demonstrate its truth.

How strange it seems that after the human race has lived on the planet for 300,000 years opinion should still be divided as to whether man is a free agent or not, and great thinkers still engaged in discussing the question with no unanimous decision in sight. How little experience has taught us, how little we have learnt of ourselves! Whether it be true that all men are free or that no man is free, the truth ought by this time, one would think, to be as far beyond the range of controversy as the proposition that man has a backbone in his body and two eyes in his head. If the question referred to the nature of God or the angels we could understand this immense delay in coming to a final decision. But this question refers to our own nature, and to its very essence. Is it not astonishing that such a controversy should exist at all?

Neither side accounts for or throws the least light on the fact, that the other side is there to oppose it. If the contentions of the freewillers gave a full account of the matter the belief in determinism would be impossible and would never have been heard of. And, reciprocally, if the contentions of the determinists gave a full account of the matter the belief in free will would be impossible and would never have been heard of. Each side, therefore, proves too much by reaching a conclusion which renders the existence of the other side unintelligible, and this in spite of the fact, under the noses of both of them, that unless the

other side were in existence there would be nothing to argue about.

Nor is the situation relieved by the device, sometimes adopted as a *dernier ressort*, of "abusing the plaintiff's attorney," of denouncing the other side as perverted reasoners, half-grown philosophers, obstinate blockheads, misguided fools, or as sheep that have strayed from the fold. In the universe for which either side is contending there is no room for the error of the other side, any contemptuous epithet which either may bestow on the other immediately recoiling on the head of its author.

Keeping to our point of view above the battle we begin to discern that the clue is not to be found in the contentions of either side to the controversy, *but in the controversy itself*, in the very fact that such a controversy exists. Just as during the Great War certain thinkers, unwelcome to the partizanship of the time but now generally acknowledged to have been in the right, used to tell us that the true nature of our civilization was to be gauged not by what this or that belligerent was contending for, but by the war itself, considered as including them both, so in this case, we begin to ask, may not something of the same kind be true? What if it should turn out that this controversy about necessity and freedom is the echo of a living conflict that goes on incessantly in the innermost essence of a self-conscious being? What if every son of man, looking deeply into himself, were to find that he carries the controversy between free-

dom and necessity in the structure of his selfhood, the tension of the contending elements being only another name for the generating energy of his self-conscious life?

From our point of view above the battle the controversy we are witnessing may be interpreted indifferently as a co-operation or a conflict, a duet or a duel. Neither side could even state its case unless the other were present to help it in doing so. Neither of the contending arguments has any meaning except in reference to the counter arguments of the opponent. If necessity were suddenly to disappear from the world, then freedom would have nothing to do and be nothing; for freedom is, simply, the defiance of a necessity that would otherwise be supreme—the defiance so picturesquely described by Carlyle as "taking the devil by the nose and wringing it." Reciprocally, if freedom were to vanish there would be nothing for necessity to rule; its occupation would be gone and its meaning would vanish along with its occupation. Whatever reality, or meaning, we assign to the one is strictly dependent on our assigning a like reality and a corresponding meaning to the other. To the determinist the concession may be made that he and his opponent are absolutely *necessary* to each other's existence. But the freewiller may console himself with the reflection he too would vanish from the scene, and his arguments along with him, unless other people were free to argue for necessity. The more fiercely they fight their battle the clearer it

becomes that the truth of the matter lies with neither of them, but includes them both.

Our conscious life is woven on a pattern every thread of which bears a necessary relation to every other and is for ever unalterable *when once the web is woven*. Contemplated as a picture in space the pattern betrays necessity both as a whole and in every part. But the weaver, *who weaves in time*, is not the web. The pattern may be woven in the form of a determinist philosophy or of a freewill philosophy as the case may be. But the determinist weaver is more than the determinism woven and the freewiller more than the free will. Both are *willers*, whether free or not, if only to the extent of willing to suppress the opponent and enlighten mankind by the extirpation of his error. Each explains his doctrine, but neither explains himself. No man has ever done so, nor ever will.

The controversy between freedom and necessity may thus be defined as an inner conflict of the soul dramatically displayed in the form of an argument between two persons. Tracing the controversy to its source these two persons interchange their characteristics and blend into one. The determinist is a determinist in so far as he fights for necessity, but he becomes a freewiller in choosing to fight at all. The freewiller is a freewiller in so far as he fights for free will, but becomes a determinist in proclaiming the necessity of his conclusion. Freedom is the defiance of necessity; necessity is the defiance of freedom; each quickened and sustained by the

opposition of the other. Adapting the language of Professor Whitehead, we may say that freedom is what a man does with necessity—he "takes it by the nose and wrings it," necessity is what a man does with freedom—he keeps it within bounds. More significant than the logic of either side is the will to enforce the argument and convert the opponent, no less active on the one side than on the other. If there is a "will-to-be-free" there is also a will-to-be-determined (or not free), of which the determinist argument is the expression, equally dynamic in submission to "inexorable law" as the other will is dynamic in resisting it. Save in a universe where law encounters opposition the "inexorableness" of law would be a wasted quality. It would be like "prohibition" applied to a country where thirst was unknown and alcohol non-existent.

Freedom is not a quality that reposes inertly in the possessor of it, to be called out now and then when a choice between alternatives has to be made. He who would be free must do as Goethe said—he must "win his freedom afresh every day," win it, that is, by continuous self-affirmation in the face of necessity, whose "inexorableness" challenges and threatens to overpower him. He, on the other hand, who would not be free must daily bow his stiff neck and summon his energies for continuous submission. And this, he will find, will put him on his mettle.

It follows, as Kant saw clearly, that no "proof" of freedom satisfactory to the critical, space-think-

ing intellect can be given. Whatever doubts about the matter may haunt us will be solved, if at all, "not by argument but by action," by action continually sustained. And this action will proceed from the Practical Reason, from the *whole man* acting in the totality of his selfhood—his integral self-affirmation in the face of necessity.

Freedom, then, is the answer of a valiant spirit to the challenge of necessity. Sometimes the answer will take the form of resistance, sometimes of submission. Which demands the greater valour is hard to say. The important thing is to know what one is doing—not to think one is resisting when he is really submitting, nor *vice versa*.

XIX

"ALL MEN ARE SOLDIERS"

WHATEVER one may think of war as a seemly occupation for communities or for individuals, however sternly one may condemn it in humanitarian interests, the fact remains that in all ages the figure of the soldier has had an irresistible attraction for moralists as an image of human life in its highest and most satisfying form. Even the Prince of Peace is reported to have said that he came not to bring peace but a sword. If the use of this warlike imagery were to be forbidden in the interests of "universal peace," moralists, preachers, reformers, political leaders and controversialists in general would find themselves well-nigh speechless at the critical moments of their propaganda; they would need a new vocabulary; the Bible would have to be expurgated from beginning to end; there would be no more talk about "fighting the good fight" and "casting down strongholds with the sword of the spirit"; and the censors would be overwhelmed in blocking out the finest passages of our literature. Bunyan's *Pilgrim* and *Holy War*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior* would be rigorously banned; "Onward, Christian soldiers" and

"The Son of God goes forth to War" would be sung no more. George Fox's *Diary*, deprived of its combative passages, would fall so flat that even a Quaker would find it unprofitable. It is difficult to paint the character of a saint without making a soldier of him at certain points. All the saints become soldiers when Sin and Death take the field.

In all the pleas for the good life that I am acquainted with the figure of the soldier, as a model or illustration of what such a life demands, is never far off. Even a plea for saintship seems to be impossible without a reference to it. St. Paul deliberately places it in the foreground—"the good soldier of Jesus Christ." In *The Free Man's Worship* of Mr. Bertrand Russell, with its heroic defiance of a heartless universe, the warrior figure, though standing in the background, is no less effectively present; Mr. Russell would not escape the censor in an age when martial language was forbidden.

Should a time ever come when war is no more, and the vocation of the soldier become a mere memory of "old unhappy far off things," will the mere memory be found sufficient, or will a new image arise to point the moral of the good life and sustain the hero in the presence of death? For, it may be presumed, release from the certainty of death is not among "the better conditions" which reformers are able to promise. To die "comfortably" is the best we can hope for from that source. But which is preferable—to die comfortably or to die like a

soldier on the field of battle, to die *of* something under an anaesthetic or to die *for* something with our eyes wide open and looking death in the face?

This last distinction, between dying *of* something and dying *for* something,[1] between perishing like a beast and "dying like a gentleman" has much to do, I cannot but think, with the irresistible attraction which the figure of the soldier has had for the moralists of all ages. These moralists have seen, the best of them clearly, the others dimly, that *nothing can be ultimately worth living for unless it is worth dying for as well*: the test of the hero lies in that. Naturally there has been some reluctance, some hesitation, in stating explicitly a truth so challenging and so formidable. It runs counter to the philosophy of comfort, popular in all ages (but never so popular as now), so that any religion which announces it might seem to doom itself, from the outset, to universal rejection. Yet Christianity has been bold enough to do so, and though Christianity has been virtually repudiated in many modern versions of it, by becoming accommodated to the prevailing philosophy of comfort, it seems to have evoked, when first presented, a widespread and vigorous response. It was an appeal for heroes. In its original form Christianity is based on the conception of a life which begins by asking "what thing in this universe is sufficiently high and precious that it should be worth *dying* for?" and then

[1] I first came across the distinction in Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, where it is made much of and great contempt is shown for those whose ambition it is to die comfortably.

having found that high and precious thing, proceeds to live for it until the hour strikes when dying for it is due; dying for it "daily" in the meantime in preparation for the consummating death which releases the actor for immortality. This is deliberate dying; dying performed as a positive act, not submitted to as a doom to be undergone, but of which the actor can say "No man taketh my life away from me; I lay it down of myself."

This, unquestionably, is the element in the soldier's mentality which has clothed his figure with an irresistible attraction to moralists in all ages, so irresistible indeed that even Christian moralists when pleading for universal peace can hardly escape from it, and break out into "Onward, Christian Soldiers" at the end of their exhortations. In spite of his bloody vocation it is impossible not to recognize that the soldier (if worthy of his vocation) has the root of the matter within him. And the root of the matter lies in his attitude towards death. For him—I speak of him at his best, as is fitting—the preservation and comfort of his life has ceased to be the object of primary concern, as it is with the multitude. He attests the worth of what he lives for by his willingness to die for it.

Possibly he is mistaken in the object of his devotion, as many martyrs have been in the cause for which they suffered. It may be that the service of his country, to which he offers his life, is not worth the sacrifice. That such mistakes are possible we can hardly deny when we remember that the cause

which the soldier on one side finds worth dying for is the cause for whose overthrow the soldier on the other side is no less willing to sacrifice himself. But the principle of his selection is eternally sound however mistaken his application of it. The light that has led him astray, if astray he be, is light from heaven. He has set an example to all men by living for something judged by him sufficiently precious to be worth dying for as well; and no matter on which side he fights, with the South for slavery or with the North against it, Valhalla shall be his home if he falls. In either case he is a standing rebuke to all men, tendencies and civilizations which make things *not* worth dying for the object of their existence, their endeavours or their policies; an example and a rebuke of which all men feel the force, however much they may deny it by their practice, showing that they feel it by the honour they pay to the soldier's memory, by the wreaths they lay on the tomb of the fallen warrior, known or "unknown."

No high civilization can dispense with the soldier's example, nor with the rebuke for the runaway that attends it. Without it we should become, as Spengler seems to predict, a race of low-conditioned "fellaheen" waiting the hour of their extermination by a stronger than they. Even the pacifist, bereft of the soldier's example, may as well abandon his "campaign." None but heroes can maintain the peace of the world, though cowards may decree it by a treaty or a pact. For peace needs

not only making but *keeping*, as the space thinker forgets but the time thinker remembers, and for this something more is needed than a pacific, comfort-loving temperament. If the abolition of war (which God grant) means that henceforth civilization is to devote its energies to objects worth living for, but *not* worth dying for, I think it were far better to remain as we are. "During the war," said a soldier to me lately—he was one who had served in its greatest perils—"during the war I went out daily with the odds against coming back alive, but not bothering about it in the least. But here I am today, worried about my health, coddling myself with comforts and physic and sending for the doctor if I catch a cold. A terrible decline! Then I used to feel that I was, somehow, a whole man. Now I seem to be only the fraction of a man—one of Spengler's 'fellaheen.'"

The provision of a "moral substitute for war" which provoked the earnest thought of William James, and has since furnished a topic for much windy eloquence in other quarters, is still an "unsolved problem," perhaps the gravest now confronting civilization. It is certain that a civilization which lives for objects not worth dying for is doomed to decay. For the individual in the same condition a "terrible decline," reducing him to the "fraction of a man," hardly can be avoided. On the other hand, if he lives for something worth dying for, he will cease not only to bother about his life but will escape a multitude of corroding bothera-

tions at connected points. Anxiety for the morrow will no longer be his portion and he will have leisure to discover himself as the "whole man"

> Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
> For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
> Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
> And leave a dead unprofitable name—
> Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
> And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
> His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
> This is the Happy Warrior; this is He
> That every Man in arms should wish to be.

XX

DEATH

Those who philosophize aright study nothing but dying and being dead.—Plato.

Death is here and death is there,
Death is busy everywhere,
All around, within, beneath,
Above is death—and we are death.
* * * * * *
Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel.
—Shelley

SPINOZA has said "there is nothing about which a wise man thinks less than of death." This saying, which is often quoted—suspiciously often, I think—by modern writers who touch on the significance of death, or seek a reason for leaving it untouched, may be accepted as true within limits. He who isolates death from life and tries to understand it in isolation is certainly not a wise man. No wise man would waste a moment's thought on anything so meaningless. But he who thinks about life as though death had nothing to do with it is not a wise man either. The "life" of which a wise man thinks is always life *that has to reckon with death*; of the life that has *not* to reckon with death—there is

nothing of which a wise man thinks less than of that! In this sense it were as true to say that he thinks as little of life as of death. In any case this "thinking little about death" is not a good mark for distinguishing the wise from the foolish. For the foolish may be said to think even less about death than the wise. And certainly, if death were nothing, only the foolish would go out of their way to say so.

There is, however, another sense in which we may say that there is nothing of which all of us, both wise and foolish, think *more* than about death. As a separate object of thought, selected for meditation or study, death may be far from our minds and never trouble us; perhaps it is well that it should be so. But the whole of our experience and our way of thinking about it have qualities which they would not have but for a subtle awareness of death behind the scene.

> But at my back I always hear
> Time's wingéd chariot hurrying near,
> And yonder all before us lie
> Deserts of vast eternity.[1]

If we were ignorant of our mortality our experience would not be what it is and our interpretation of it would be entirely different. Our thinking and feeling are the thinking and feeling of beings who, unlike the lower animals, know very well that "destiny cannot doom them

[1] Andrew Marvell, *To his coy Mistress.*

not to die," even though attention is seldom focussed on the thought. Morality is based on that knowledge and religion saturated with it. Apart from it, philosophy, at least such philosophy as we are acquainted with, would never have made its appearance in the world. Spinoza's philosophy would be just as impossible as any other; indeed, the very saying I have just quoted shows that his thought was working in a field encircled by the knowledge of death; the saying would be quite gratuitous otherwise. What the philosophy of the immortal gods may be we have no means of knowing, but we may be sure that it would be unlike the philosophy of mortal men, which Plato, in a moment of profoundest insight, once defined as a "meditation on death." As for Omar Khayyám and those who adopt the motto "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die,"—that dolefullest of reasons for making a feast,—it would be idle to plead that such people think little about death. Their whole philosophy of life, and the standards of value which go with it, are avowedly based on the significance of death. Their poetry is death-haunted throughout, perpetually reminding us of mortality by the very means they take to drown the thought of it, their viands salted with its essence and their wine cups flavoured with its bitterness.

> Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn
> I leaned, the secret of my life to learn:
> And Lip to Lip it answered—While you live,
> Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return.

This, then, is the sense in which it may be said that there is nothing about which all men, both wise and foolish, think *more* than about death. Its influence enters surreptitiously, when not openly, into the meaning of everything we think about, of everything we experience, of everything we value as good or bad. At every point we interpret our experience as beings who are inwardly conscious of their mortality, and the very efforts we make to suppress that consciousness, whether by eating and drinking or making philosophic resolutions to forget it, only serve to reveal it the more. Never is "Time's wingéd chariot" more clearly audible than when we bury our heads in the sand to escape from the sound of the pursuing wheels. In our emotional life its presence is even clearer and its power more active. Love and death are inseparable companions. Death is the baptism that love waits to be baptized with, vitalizing it from the moment of its birth with the foreboding of a tragic interruption, "woven fine" into the texture of its joy. The underlying theme of every great tragedy is death.

> Death has set his mark and seal
> On all we are and all we feel.

The conquest of death is the final achievement of religion. No religion is worth its name unless it can prove itself more than a match for death; hence the need of valour at the heart of it. It is often said, by those who would domesticate religion to the service of man's temporal interests, that reli-

gion has to do exclusively with *life*, as a means to making it happier, juster, more beautiful or whatever else we may desire it to be. But what does all that amount to (save the bitterest of ironies) when the beloved falls into the everlasting silence or you yourself "stand on the brink" and say good-bye? It is true that religion has to do with "life," but the "life" in question is known to be *death-ended* by everyone who lives it, becoming harder to part with by every degree that makes it more precious to possess. Nor can we set this down to mere "selfishness" and say that men will grow out of it as they become wiser. The "others," for whom the altruist bids us live, have to die as well as ourselves, and there it is that the shoe pinches hardest. A "brotherhood of man" in which a brother's death makes no difference to the brethren is not an inspiring conception. And is not the life of society itself death-ended? They reckon ill who leave that out.

Christianity, now debased almost beyond recognition in secularized versions of it, came into the world as a death-conquering religion. It centred round the figure of a death conqueror, "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." Its power through the ages is derivative from that; like a tree severed from the roots its vitality declines the instant the connection is broken. Christianity will never revive until it rises to its original height; perhaps in a trans-

figured form. The last enemy it has to destroy is death.

I began this book by introducing the conception of the whole man as an indissoluble unity of mind and body. I have pleaded that religion is the affair neither of reason, nor of faith, nor of conscience, nor of any other separable function or faculty, but of the whole man in his integrity, responding to a universe whose wholeness he shares.

I end the book with the same conception, brought into clearer relief by confronting it with death. By death the whole man stands challenged and the challenge is inescapable. However tempted he may be to divide his nature in other connections, to assign this part of his life to one faculty and that to another, faith here, reason there, such division is impossible when the "last enemy" presents itself. The man must now stand forth in his integrity, rise to his full height and mobilize his total self for a summary act of victorious self-affirmation. It is the whole man who must perish, or the whole man who must conquer.

And this he will not put off till the world is slipping from his grasp and old age or sickness has left him without force to affirm himself. From the hour when the majestic truth first dawns upon him that "destiny cannot doom him not to die" he will answer Death's challenge by clothing the work of his life in the imperishable values of Truth, Beauty and Love. Long before he stands *in articulo mortis*

the battle may be won. Daily he will die *for* something, winning his immortality, as he wins his freedom, by a continuous self-affirmation in the name of the Eternal Values. Death, whenever it comes, will find him practised in dying and ready to go to his God like a gentleman and a soldier.

scriptor moriturus lectorem moriturum salutat

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